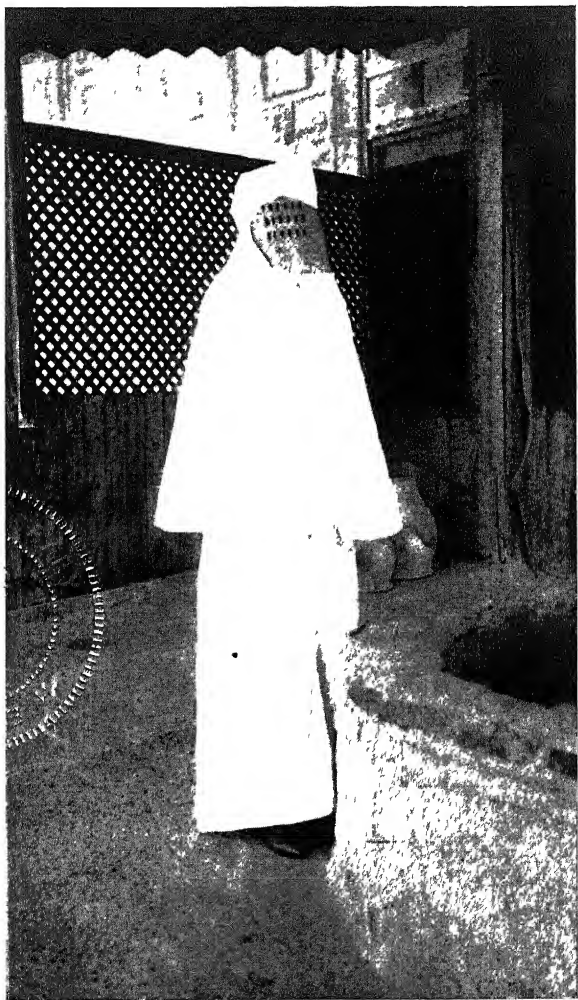


PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA



● [Frontispiece

THE AUTHOR IN PILGRIM DRESS

PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

By LADY EVELYN COBBOLD

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

First Edition

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1934

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Call mankind to the pilgrimage and they will come on foot and on every fast mount from every remote corner, to seek that in which their good lies, and praise God during certain days for all the blessings He has given them including the cattle (to be sacrificed during the pilgrimage) from which let them eat, and feed the distressed and needy.

(The Koran, chap. xxii, verses 27 and 28.)

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FOREWORD

By HIS EXCELLENCY SHEIKH HAFIZ WAHBA,
Sa'udi Arabian Minister in London.

WHEN Lady Evelyn Cobbold asked me if I would write a foreword to the account of her pilgrimage to Mecca I felt both honoured and eager to comply. It is a very gratifying and pleasant duty to sponsor such an interesting and memorable record into the intelligent reading world.

As pilgrims, all of us, in what Bunyan calls "the wilderness of this world," this intimate and vivid description of the Hadj cannot fail to interest everyone. To Moslems it will be both interesting and instructive as recording the impression which the carrying out of the sacred duty of Hadj has produced on the first Moslem Englishwoman to perform it. To all internationally-minded, thinking people, this book will be welcome as the portrayal at first hand and from so agreeable a pen, of the Hadj, its significance, its rites and ceremonies, and their meaning and history, to say nothing of the journey and the customs and way of life in Arabia.

INTRODUCTION

"If this be Islam," asks Goethe, "do we not all live in Islam?"
"Yes," answers Carlyle, "all of us that have any moral life, we all live so."

I AM often asked when and why I became a Moslem. I can only reply that I do not know the precise moment when the truth of Islam dawned on me. It seems that I have always been a Moslem. This is not so strange when one remembers that Islam is the natural religion that a child left to itself would develop. Indeed, as a Western critic once described it, "Islam is the religion of common sense."

As a child I spent the winter months in a Moorish villa on a hill outside Algiers, where my parents went in search of sunshine. There I learnt to speak Arabic and my delight was to escape my governess and visit the Mosques with my Algerian friends, and unconsciously I was a little Moslem at heart. After three years' wintering at Mustapha Supérieure we left the villa for good, much to my despair, but in time I forgot my Arab friends, my prayers in the Mosque and even the Arabic language.

Some years went by and I happened to be in Rome staying with some Italian friends, when my host asked me if I would like to visit the Pope. Of course I was thrilled, and, clad all in black with a long veil, I was admitted into the august presence in company with my host and his sister. When His Holiness suddenly addressed me, asking if I was a Catholic, I was taken aback for a moment and then replied that I was a Moslem. What possessed me I don't pretend to know, as I had not given a thought to Islam for many years. A match was lit and I then and there determined to read up and study the Faith. The more I read and the more I studied, the more convinced I became that Islam was the most practical religion, and the one most calculated to solve the world's many perplexing problems, and to bring to humanity peace and happiness. Since then I have never wavered in my belief that there is but one God ; that Moses, Jesus, Muhammed and others were Prophets, divinely inspired, that to every nation God has sent an apostle, that we are not born in sin, and that we do not need any redemption, that we do not need anyone to intercede between us and God, Whom we can approach at all times, and that no one can intercede for us, not even Muhammed or Jesus, and that our salvation depends entirely on ourselves and our actions.

The word "Islam" means surrender to God.

It also means peace. A Moslem is one who is "in harmony with the Decrees of the Author of This World," one who has made his peace with God and His creatures.

Islam is based on two fundamental truths, on the Oneness of God and on the Brotherhood of Man, and is entirely free of any encumbrances of theological dogma. Above everything else, it is a positive faith. Muhammed was once asked "What is Islam?" to which he replied: "Obedience to God's commandments and Kindness to His creatures." On another occasion he was asked "What is a Moslem?" and he replied: "A Moslem is that man from whose tongue and hand people are safe," and on yet another occasion he said: "The test of a man's religion lies in his dealings with others." In the Koran we read:

And who is better than he who calls people to God and does good. . . . Let your weapon of defence be kindness, and, lo and behold, he that has been your enemy becomes your bosom friend. . . . Surely God enjoins the maintaining of justice and the doing of good to others. . . . Good deeds abide for ever and are the most acceptable to God, and the most worthy of His reward.

Everywhere in the Koran to believe is to do good. To believe and not do good cannot exist in Islam.

It remains for me to say a few words about the place of the pilgrimage in Islam. Every Moslem,

male or female, is required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once. Five conditions are, however, necessary in order to make this injunction obligatory :

(1) Ripeness of intelligence and discernment in the pilgrim.

(2) Perfect freedom and liberty.

(3) Possession of the means of transport and subsistence during the journey.

(4) Possession of means sufficient to support the pilgrim's family during his absence.

(5) The possibility and practicability of the journey.

The influence of the Hadj cannot be exaggerated. To be a member of that huge congregation gathered together from the four corners of the earth, on this sacred occasion and on this sacred spot, and to join with them in all humility in the glorification of God, is to have one's consciousness impressed by the full significance of the Islamic Ideal, is to be privileged to participate in one of the most soul-inspiring experiences that have ever been granted to human beings. To visit the birthplace of Islam, to tread the sacred ground hallowed by the memories of Muhammed's long toil and sufferings in his struggle to call erring humanity back to God, is to re-live those glorious years of sacrifice and martyrdom, is to have one's soul kindled by that celestial fire which lighted up the whole earth. But this is not

all. The Hadj above everything else makes for unity among Moslems. If there is anything that unifies the scattered forces of Islam and imbues them with mutual sympathy it is the pilgrimage. It provides them with a central point to which they rally from all corners of the earth. It creates for them annually an occasion to meet, and know one another, to exchange views and compare experiences and unite their various efforts to the common good. Distances are annihilated. Difference of sect are set aside. Divergences of race and colour cease to exist in this fraternity of faith that unites all Moslems in one great brotherhood and makes them conscious of the glorious heritage that is theirs. Then, when the religious duties are over, merchants from all lands discuss trade and commerce and transact business with each other, theologians and jurists discuss questions of religion and jurisprudence, scientists the latest advances in science, men of letters literature, financiers problems of finance, politicians and statesmen questions of national and international politics. The institution of Hadj does not represent to the Moslems merely a sacred institution but also a League of Nations, an International Academy of Art and Science, and an International Chamber of Commerce all in one. Professor Snouk Hurgronje says :

The ideal of a league of human races has indeed been approached by Islam more nearly than by any other ;

for the League of Nations founded on the basis of Muhammed's religion takes the principle of the equality of all human races so seriously as to put other communities to shame.

Sir Thomas Arnold says :

But above all Islam ordains a yearly gathering of believers of all nations and languages, brought together from all parts of the world to pray in that sacred place (The Kaaba) towards which their faces are set in every hour of private worship in their distant homes. No fetch of religious genius could have conceived a better expedient for impressing on the minds of the faithful a sense of their common life and their common brotherhood in the bond of faith. Here is a supreme act of common worship, the Negro of the West Coast of Africa meets the Chinaman from the distant East ; the courtly and polished Ottoman recognises his brother Moslem in the wild islander from the farthest end of the Malayan Sea. At the same time, throughout the whole Muhammedan world the hearts of believers are lifted up in sympathy with their more fortunate brethren gathered together in the sacred city (Mecca) as in their own homes they celebrate the festival of 'Id al Adha or (as it is called in Turkey) the feast of Bairam.

In the following account I have spoken of the ceremonial rites performed during the pilgrimage. These are merely commemorative acts designed to remind us of the trials of Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael, so that we may be brought to realise more keenly the infinite mercy and the all-transforming

grace of God. They must not be taken to mean that ceremonialism or ritualism plays any part in Islam. As someone has said, these acts are in the nature of a historical pageant to commemorate the birth of the Arab nation. How small a part ceremonialism or mere form plays in Islam is illustrated by the following verse from the Koran :

It is not righteousness to turn in prayer towards the east or the west, but he is righteous who believes in God, the Last Day, the Angels, the Books and the Prophets, and gives of his wealth in spite of his love for it, to the near of kin, the orphan, the needy, the wayfarer and the beggar, and for the manumission of slaves, and prays and pays the poor-rate, and keeps his promise when he gives one, and is patient in adversity, affliction, and in times of conflict.

J E D D A H

*A bare hill range in the distance frowning
Dim wrapt in haze like a shrouded ghost,
With its jagged peaks the horizon crowning
Broods o'er the stark Arabian coast.*

“A Night in the Red Sea” (SIR ALFRED LYALL).

Great Nefud

SHAMMAR

N E J D

Medina

Riyad.

Beni Harb

Wahabis

Rhabigh

Jeddah

Mecca

Taif

Suakin

ASIR

YAMEN

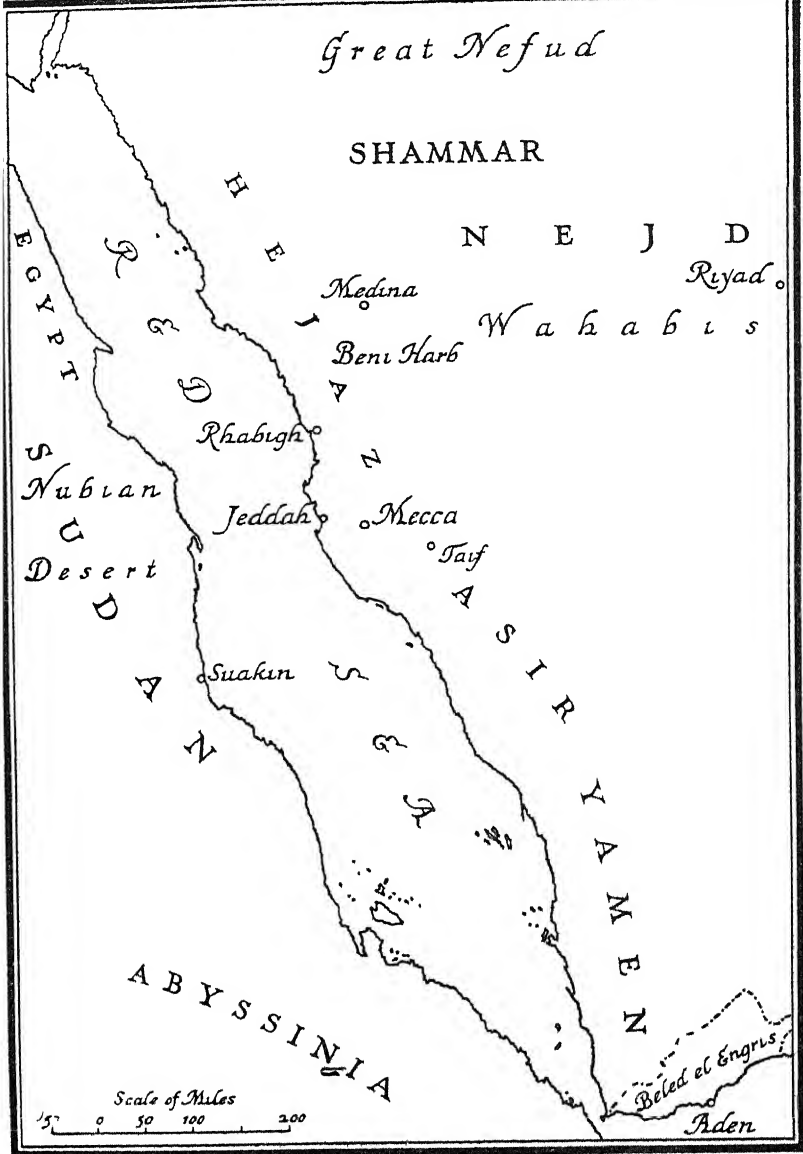
ABYSSINIA

Scale of Miles

0 50 100 200

Beled el Engris

Aden



JEDDAH

February 22nd, 1933. Port Said.

I WATCH the train to Cairo disappear and feel I have indeed cut myself off from my friends and everyone I know. I love Egypt, but now it is Arabia calls me: I am waiting for the train to Suez, my destination is Jeddah. What will the future hold for me? Probably only disappointment. If I am refused admission to where I wish to go, there will be nothing for it but to return and spend a few weeks up the Nile. In the meantime I have over two hours to kill. Remembering that at the Tewfikia Mosque is a friend, Sheikh Sid Ahmed, whose acquaintance I made in 1915 when detained at Port Said while the Turks attacked Kantara, I go in search of him and find him in the little room behind the Mosque, surrounded by his books, and a small boy on his knee. We mutually recognise each other and I sit down to chat with him over a cup of coffee. Incidentally he tells me that the wife whom I met when last I saw him, five years ago, is dead, and that he has taken to himself another wife—hence the child.

I confide to him my destination and my hopes, he wishes me good luck and says he would have liked to accompany me if only I had given him notice.

When the time comes to catch my train, he sees me to the station, and gives me delicious rolls and oranges, the former left over from the recent feast of Bairam.

The train is stuffy, there is a sandstorm, and everything is shut down. At Ismailia I change into a foolish little train labelled "to Suez and Port Tewfik"—in my carriage I have an English sailor for companion. As Captain of a tramp he has seen many amusing sides of life and tells me strange tales. So the time passes. At Suez I am advised to go on to Port Tewfik where I find the Italian steamer *Messowah* on which I have a cabin reserved, and hear she is due to leave the following day at 9 a.m. After inspecting the local hotel, I return to the steamer and get permission to sleep on board, where I am most comfortable. Early next morning I go to have my passport *viséd*, and am asked when I was last vaccinated. As it is over five years ago since I was done, they refuse to pass me, so I arrange with the Medical Officer, an Egyptian, who has studied in Constantinople, that he should vaccinate me there and then in his room on the Quay where he had all the necessary disinfectants, etc., at hand.

The pilgrim season to Arabia's Holy City is approaching and I find several would-be Hadjis awaiting the doctor, including two Chinese gentlemen whose mandarin robes and general air of aloofness are to me most attractive. I am the first victim, and am done in both arms, one for small-pox and the other for cholera. While waiting till the small punctures dry, before replacing my blouse, I watch my fellow-sufferers go through the ordeal, and notice that they do not bleed the tiniest drop. I accuse the *hakim*¹ of having made me a deeper incision, but am told that I as a Northerner have much more blood than these children of the Sun.

Returning to the boat I find that two other passengers have arrived, Sir Andrew Ryan, the British Minister at Jeddah, and the Pasha of Meknes, a magnificent Moor, who is here on pilgrimage.

February 24th.

Yesterday I sat on the sunny side of the deck basking in the warmth, but to-day both Sir Andrew and I are seeking the shade. The Pasha of Meknes remains secluded in his cabin where he has his meals brought him and only emerges occasionally to enjoy the sea breezes. He is generally attended by one or other of his retinue of three stalwart Moors. Finding him alone this morning I approached and ventured to practise my Arabic on

¹ Doctor.

him. After his first surprise he appeared quite ready to talk, and told me he left Morocco a month ago and had been enjoying a fortnight in Cairo. He is now on pilgrimage for the first time and hopes to spend some weeks in Medina before going to Mecca. He then proposes visiting Syria and Palestine and in June he goes, "Inshallah," to Paris to stay with his son-in-law, who is the Imam of the Mosque there.

This afternoon we arrived at Kosseir, where we remained some hours, so I persuaded Sir Andrew to come on shore with me and explore the town, which is built of mud bricks and apparently lives on its fishing industry, as nearly every house had a net hanging out and there were numbers of boats. Also several fishermen were wading waist deep in the shallow bay with small hand nets. I heard there were lovely shells on the beach to the South, but we had not time to seek them.

February 25th.

To-day the Captain took us a tour round his ship, which has accommodation for sixteen first-class passengers, and, except in the pilgrim season, he scarcely ever sees one. The second class looked just as clean and comfortable as the first, and there I found the two Chinese gentlemen I met at Suez, also the retinue of the Pasha and an Egyptian Effendi—all on Pilgrimage.

In the third class were many Indians and a few poor Turks all bound for the Holy Cities, and some of them were already discarding their clothes and swathing themselves in the Ihram, or two towels prescribed for pilgrimage. A few of the Indians had their womenfolk with them. At tea-time the Pasha astonished us by joining our little party in the saloon. Sir Andrew was delighted to make his acquaintance, as he had lived some years at Rabat in French Morocco, and knew Meknes well. Unfortunately he could not speak Arabic, but I did my best to interpret for them and they found many mutual friends. The English Minister has spent most of his career in Constantinople and speaks Turkish fluently, and I can but think that Jeddah must feel rather circumscribed to one who was accustomed to the excitement and charm of life as it was lived in the days gone by on the Bosphorus, which was then perhaps the most coveted diplomatic post in Europe.

February 26th.

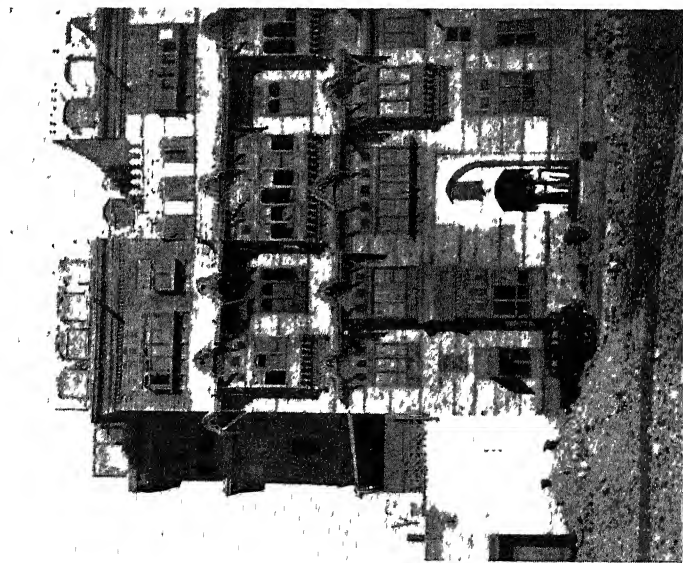
We arrive at Jeddah after four days' voyage, on summer seas and the view from the bay is enchanting. A white and brown town giving the idea of a fortress, as it is enclosed on three sides by a high wall, its minarets stand out against the sky, its quaint carved wooden windows bulge over the narrow streets. Beyond the golden desert rise the

low foothills of the Arabian mountains, losing themselves in the distance to the heights far away which reach 8,000 ft. and more. The sea is a marvellous blue; inside the lagoons it becomes turquoise in the shallow water threaded by streaks of purple caused by seaweed.

I come a stranger to this land, hoping to get permission to visit the sacred places of Arabia and the Philbys have most kindly offered to receive me as a guest in their house. It is perhaps unnecessary to mention that Mr. Philby is a Moslem and the trusted friend of King Ibn Sa'ud, besides being the well-known explorer who twice crossed Arabia from sea to sea and traversed the terrible "Rub al Khali" a year ago.

My hostess fetches me in a launch flying a green flag with white lettering in Arabic "La illaha illallah, Muhammed Rasoul Allah"—(there is but one God. Muhammed is a Messenger of God). It is the flag of Abd el Aziz Ibn Sa'ud, Sovereign Lord of this land, and I feel indeed I am in Arabia.

The launch has nearly a mile to go, as the coral reefs and shallows make it dangerous for vessels to come close to the shore, and I am amused at the dexterity of our youthful steersman, an Arab child of ten years, who stands upright to see better, while guiding the wheel entirely with his bare toes within the coral reefs. He brings us safely to the steps, where we land to pass through the Customs



BEIT EL BAGHDADI (MR PHILBY'S HOUSE)

House, and shortly after we enter the Philbys' large stone house facing the Quay, "Beit el Bagdadi."

February 27th.

Early this morning I wake to hear the deep resonant voice of the Muezzin floating across the still air from the minaret of the little Mosque across the street. In those first few half-conscious moments between sleeping and waking it recalls me to the knowledge that I am once again in the land of Islam.—I step out of my room on to the roof garden, where the first faint flush of dawn is gently reddening the eastern sky—and I listen to the call to prayer.

"Allahu Akbar. . . ."—(God is greater than all else. . . . I testify there is no God but He. . . . Prayer is better than sleep. . . . Come to prayer. . . .). As the beautiful cadences are elaborated to rise and fall as the Muezzin moves round the minaret to call to the four corners of the world beneath, I wonder how anyone can listen to that call unmoved. Surely does the Koranic Arabic hold a spell—even as the reading of the Sacred Book thrills its hearers.

In Islam no priesthood intervenes between the suppliant and his God. The Muezzin who sounds the call to Prayer, the Imam who preaches the Friday sermon in the Mosque, maintain themselves

by other occupations, as did the disciples of old, when James was a fisherman and Paul a maker of tents.

In the early days of Islam, the Prophet always led the prayers in the Mosque, and his example was followed for generations, when it was the duty of the Khaliph to do the same, and many of the sermons of the great Khaliphs are preserved to this day. Now that the Princes of Islam no longer preach to the people, the sermon, except in a few isolated cases, has become merely formal. The Wakfs (charitable endowments) which was inaugurated in Egypt in 1835 by that far-seeing ruler Muhammed Ali, and which has control of immense wealth, comes to the help of the Mosque when necessary, but the duties of the Imam and the Muezzin are never degraded by mercenary considerations, or carried on as a means of earning a living.

In olden times no town had more than one Mosque, but with the growth of population and riches the Mosques were multiplied in the great cities. The Prophet's orders against luxury were ignored and much wealth was lavished on the Mosques, which one cannot regret in view of the great beauty of many of them, though one may deplore the loss of the early simplicity and ideals of Islam.

But it is to the Mosques of Mecca and Medina

that all hearts turn ; to Mecca, the City which is the cradle of Islam's faith and where Abraham raised a temple (the Kaaba) to the worship of the one God—and I wonder greatly if I shall ever enter there as a pilgrim—"Inshallah"—"Allah Karim"—(God willing—God is gracious).

February 28th.

The King is away at Riyad, his capital in Nejd, sixteen days' camel ride from here, so I fear he will not get the letter his Minister in London wrote him for some time.

Before leaving England I had an interview with His Excellency Sheikh Hafiz Wahba, Minister of Saudi Arabia, and confided to him my desire to visit the Sacred Cities ; he most kindly wrote to His Majesty on the subject. If I succeed in accomplishing my pilgrimage, I feel it will be largely owing to his help. Till that letter reaches the King, I must possess my soul in patience, and my time is pleasantly spent bathing in the warm sea within the coral reefs, for fear of sharks, or in motor drives in the desert.

When the late King Hussein reigned over the Hedjaz the Europeans who were suffered to reside in Jeddah were never allowed beyond its walls, and life must have been wellnigh intolerable, depending on one's house roof for a breath of air, where one was always at the mercy of the ubiquitous

mosquito and its malaria-envenomed sting. Under the ægis of the present King the embargo has been lifted, and every evening, when the sun loses some of its fierceness, the whole world of Jeddah leaves the City walls and goes into the desert for exercise and air. There are no roads, but the numerous Fords make their way through the sand and scrub and seldom let us down. There are a few sand grouse and hares to be shot and a lovely creek in which to bathe.

When the moon is full we go at night to swim in the silvered sea, so salt that it is difficult to sink, and we picnic under the magic moon, whose white radiance lights the desert. I wander along the beach collecting the beautiful shells and red coral that strew the shore. These Arabian nights will live long in my memory.

We pass many pilgrims on their way to the Holy Cities, some in motors, some swaying on camels and the very poor on foot. The men are clothed in their *Ihram* (or two towels) and bareheaded. The women going to Medina are in black or colours, while those on the road to Mecca are in their pilgrim white. Some of the poor pilgrims from far countries take years on their way. My host related how he was one day motoring on the Medina road and seeing a man, his wife and boy trudging wearily through the hot sand, with all their worldly goods packed on their heads and



MARKET PLACE, JEDDAH



MECCA GATE, JEDDAH

backs, stopped his car to give them a lift as he was travelling a short way on their road. What was his surprise when they gratefully lifted their bundles into the car to find three small babies in them, born during the years of tramping towards their goal.

March 1st.

I find life in Jeddah very different from that of any Eastern City I have visited before. It is so purely Arab. There are no drinking booths, no shops, excepting its bazaars, which only supply the needs of its Arab population. Cinemas, gramophones, the manifold necessities that make up the complicated life of civilisation are unknown.

The architecture of its houses is most attractive. They are built of stone procured from quarries in the desert close by; but wood is largely used in the quaintly carved shutters, doors and balconies and is mostly teak, imported from Java, as there are no trees in this land.

The Philbys' house, "Beit el Bagdadi," is one of the largest and finest in the town, with a roof garden extending round two sides on which flowers are carefully cultivated in pots; mostly large pink periwinkles, which are perpetual-flowering, seeding themselves, and very effective.

On a raised platform in one corner is a bedstead, where my host sleeps when in Jeddah. He also has a house in Mecca, where he stays alternate

weeks. There are several bathrooms, mostly round stone cupolas with marble floors and domed roofs pierced with holes, elaborately carved in Arabesque designs, which fascinate me ; the floors have deep holes to let the water away, and as we are provided with tin baths we upset them down the holes when finished with.

There are loggias built over part of the roof garden in which we take refuge from the sun and the view looking West over the sea is enchanting. Jeddah has no green vegetation of any description, but the amazing blues of the sea supply colour to the landscape, and the sunsets are often dreams of beauty.

But a black shadow lies on the sunlit sea of the harbour ; the grim hull of a pilgrim ship that was burned to the water-line three years ago, and in which over a thousand pilgrims perished. The charred skeleton lies alongside the coral reefs, all that is left of a French vessel chartered by the Moslems of Algeria and Morocco, to convey them the long voyage to Jeddah. The fire broke out during the night, when all on board slept, and had it not been for the prompt efforts of an English merchant ship that chanced to be in port, also those of the British and Dutch Legations who put to sea in their launches when they saw the flames, not one of the poor pilgrims would have escaped.

Paris sent out a well-known journalist to write

a report on the disaster, and he dutifully lavished praise on the coolness and resource shown by the ship's officers and crew, who all escaped safely from the holocaust, while to the doomed pilgrims was left the choice of being burnt alive, or drowned in a sea infested by sharks.

Surely Nemesis overtook the journalist, when, a year later, within a hundred miles of the tragedy, a French ship in which he was a passenger caught fire, and the journalist lost his life, whether by fire, water, or a shark, history does not relate.

March 2nd.

To-day we drove along the desert track which points the way to Mecca. Practically no rain has fallen this winter, but the camels find pasturage in the thorny scrub that manages to survive in the arid soil.

An American engineer has proved that irrigation could make this land fertile. Two years ago he sank a small artesian well on the edge of the foothills, where they meet the plain, and now this small plot is green with burseem and corn.

Arabia covers more than one million square miles, of which barely one-fifth is cultivated; it may contain mineral wealth, but the feeling of its people is against all foreign interference, and up to now they have neither the capital nor the expert knowledge to develop its possible resources themselves.

Shortly after passing the well we turn back to Jeddah, as we are nearing the forbidden Territory, on the confines of which two tall stone pillars mark the entrance and none but the true believer may venture to pass within.

How I envy the pilgrims we meet on their way to Mecca, while we return to the social life of Jeddah, which would be very pleasant if one were not aware of the mysterious City of Islam hidden in the hills only a few miles from us. Why do we always long for the unattainable, for the Blue Bird which hovers just beyond our reach?

We return to Jeddah and dine at the New Hotel, which was opened for the pilgrims a few days ago, and where the American engineers, who have come to try and obtain the oil concessions from the King, are now staying. Their wives, Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Twitchell, welcome us and give us an excellent dinner, and the party includes Mr. Longrigg, the English representative of the Iraq Oil Company, who is also here trying to get the concession. Rivalry does not appear to spoil the friendly relations existing between all parties, even when Mr. Longrigg discovers broken glass in his coffee-cup! After dinner we played bridge and on breaking up the party at midnight, the moon looked so enticing that several of us went for a drive in the desert to the creek and had a bathe.

Even the Ford motor could not vulgarise the

lovely moon-splashed desert, whose stillness was unbroken by a camel caravan we passed, silently treading its way Northward; mysterious phantoms of beasts and men of another world than ours—I inwardly prayed that the motor may never displace the camel;—that patient animal that once helped to conquer Syria and Egypt for the Arabs and which they introduced into Asia Minor and also into Spain, in the days when Tarik led his victorious Berbers against Granada and laid the foundations of the Moslem Empire in Western Europe.

Even as I write this, the Berbers are being driven from their last stronghold in the Atlas Mountains by the French Armies, and a chapter of a great race will finally close, a race noted for the independence and valiant qualities of its men and the beauty of its women, and which has gone down fighting to the last against an enemy vastly superior in numbers and supplied with every modern equipment and instrument of destruction.

March 4th.

My host left for Mecca early this morning to take part in the Friday midday prayer; he wore ordinary Arab clothes, consisting of the Abba, over a white robe, and on his head the Koffeya bound by the Aghal. The pilgrimage this year begins officially on the 4th April. As the Arabs count by lunar months, it falls eleven days earlier each

year, and for the next decade the Moslems can count on a comparatively cool period both for the Fast of Ramadan and the Pilgrimage.

This evening I hear that the King has received his Minister's letter from London and is favourably considering my request. I am advised to write a letter to the King's son, the Emir Faisal, Viceroy of the Hedjaz, giving him details of myself and family, also the Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs is coming to Jeddah for a few days and wishes to see me.

March 5th.

His Excellency Fouad Hamza called this afternoon; he is a Syrian, fair, speaking excellent English. After a short talk, when he showed himself exceedingly kind and helpful, he returned to Mecca with my letter to the Viceroy—so now I await my fate, which is in the King's hands. I am asking a great favour, as the King has decided to allow no European Moslem to enter the forbidden ground until he has spent at least a year of probation in Jeddah. Unfortunately more than once a European has entered Mecca, professing himself a Moslem, only when writing up his experiences to enhance his reputation by allowing the world to think he was performing the pilgrimage at the risk of his life, and the Arabs naturally resent this abuse of their hospitality.

Last night I dined at the British Legation, a

delightful meeting-place for the society of Jeddah, where the stranger has a warm welcome. Inside, it has every appearance of an English country house, as Lady Ryan has furnished the rooms with easy chairs and sofas all covered in pretty cool-looking glazed chintzes. Here I met the Turkish, Italian, Persian and Bolshevist Ministers, the last with his wife, a fair-haired Russian from the Volga—while he is a Moslem from Turkistan. I found her a very pleasant, well-read woman and am told that he is an expert chess player, besides being a good linguist.

March 6th.

To-day the Dutch banker, Mr. Jacobs, entertained us to a marvellous lunch cooked by his Javanese cook ; the staple food was rice, and with the rice we ate many strange and attractive dishes. Everyone is hospitable, and though there are very few European women here and possibly thirty men, living a great part of the year in intense heat and damp, which can be distinctly depressing, there is much gaiety and everyone seems determined to make the best of life, though entertaining is somewhat difficult, as with the exception of meat, all foodstuffs are imported from Egypt and have a heavy duty to pay, while alcoholic drinks of every description are strictly forbidden. Another difficulty to contend with is the want of a hairdresser,

A friendly old Turk occasionally shears our heads, making them look like an Eton crop, which is particularly sad in the case of my hostess who has lovely wavy auburn hair which is completely wasted in this country. The Arabs make a plentiful use of henna, dying their finger-tips, hair and even their favourite animals with it. They naturally think Mrs. Philby is doing likewise ; indeed, one Arab gentleman, wishing to make a small return for the hospitality extended to him, sent her a large supply of the pigment, under the impression that he was making a useful gift.

March 8th.

My host has returned from Mecca, and tells me it now only remains for the King to give his decision, whether or not I shall be permitted to enter the Holy Cities, and in the meantime the Viceroy, who is making a short stay in his Palace outside the town, will pay a visit to my hostess on Friday. This is an honour only conferred on a Moslem household, and a small party, including the British Minister and Lady Ryan, are invited to meet him. The King himself refuses to give audience to European women, making an exception in the case of my hostess.

Early this morning before the day grew unbearably hot, I visited the bazaars, escorted by Mustapha Nazir, a gentleman with a streak of

Persian blood in him, in the employ of Mr. Philby. After making our way through a medley of archways and narrow lanes faced by tall stone houses, evidently inhabited by the well-to-do, we entered the long avenues of streets which constitute the shopping centre of Jeddah, each side of which is bordered with open booths displaying their wares. Many awnings of palm fibre, hung at different levels, made variety of shade upon the crowd which sauntered through the market exchanging greetings, and once some camels thrust their way between the stalls, making grotesque blue shadows on the white dust, while over all hung the acrid, pungent smell of the East, a compound of spices, coffee, camels, penetrating and alluring.

Some of the goods displayed were quite attractive, but on investigation I found many of the articles were manufactured in Japan, and I fear a pretty coloured material, light and transparent as muslin, that I purchased from a dignified gentleman in amber robe and neat white turban, is under grave suspicion. Quaint necklaces of coral, both red and black, were certainly local products, and I invested in the latter colour, as it is peculiar to this coast; but I refused to be tempted by the pearls which are much inferior to those from the Bahrein Islands in the Persian Gulf.

At the street corners were seated the money-changers, with their neat piles of coins heaped in

small pyramids on flat trays. Mustapha tells me that when the Azzan sounds, and they hasten to the Mosque for prayer, they leave their money without a thought of anxiety, knowing that none dare touch it. For among the reforms instituted by the present King, theft has been entirely eradicated. The severance of a hand has been a good deterrent, and after all is not so severe a penalty as when a century ago in England, a man was hanged for stealing a sheep, and the establishment of absolute security in this country is not the least among the priceless gifts Ibn Sa'ud has bestowed on Saudi Arabia.

March 9th.

The Emir Faisal arrived punctually at five o'clock (eleven by Arab time which counts from the sunrise at 6 a.m.). It was impressive to see his tall figure enter the doorway clad in a brown and gold Abba over a flowing white robe and the picturesque head-dress of the Nejd, the Koffeya of diaphanous white bound round his head by black and gold cords—called the *Aghal*—while beside him stood his small son, dressed exactly like his father. They were followed by some of the Ministers. The Emir is slender and exceedingly graceful in his movements, and, like most Nejd Arabs, has an air of distinction and good breeding. Through his mother he is a direct descendant of Ibn Abdel Wahab, the great



H R H EMIR FAISAL, VICEROY OF THE HEDJAZ

founder of the Wahhabi sect, who perhaps might be described as the Puritans of Islam. His small son won all our hearts. Little Abdulla had never before entered a European household or met European women, yet his dignity and self-possession never failed him. At a gesture from his father he left his side and seated himself on a divan among us. He wore sandals bound round each big toe with a piece of embroidery, and as he drew his small feet under him, he resigned himself to a conversation carried on with difficulty, as our Arabic was not fluent. He told us he loved riding camels and horses, but seemed slightly offended when I asked him if he ever rode a donkey. Already at the age of ten years, this child has left the women's quarters and holds his own little court.

March 10th.

One of the excitements of Jeddah is the day the English boat *Toledo* calls, bringing the mails, and also groceries and newspapers. This only occurs once a fortnight, and it is most unfortunately arranged that the Italian boat arrives on the same day. All the morning anxious eyes are fixed on the horizon, and as soon as the English vessel is sighted, that is generally about 10.30 a.m., the little world of Jeddah go out in their launches and for-gather on board to read their letters. Often an early lunch of cheese sandwiches and beer is par-

taken of while all the news is discussed. The small steamer is one's link with the outside world ; when we leave her and she passes out of sight on her way to Port Sudan, we know we are once more shut off from all knowledge of what is happening on our globe for two whole weeks.

This afternoon, Mrs. Andresen, a Dutch lady, took us to visit some ex-slaves who were housed free by the charity of a rich merchant ; the rooms opening into a courtyard were spotlessly clean—two women sleep in each room, they earn enough to keep themselves by laundrywork and odd jobs. Most of them were from the Sudan and appeared happy and contented. There was a well in the centre of the courtyard and a few trees and flowers grew about ; a cat, some goats and pigeons were also inmates. One old lady was pointed out, who had nearly died of starvation. She was too proud to let them know she had been unable to find work and went without food for four days when she collapsed. The other women came to her rescue on discovering her condition, and she was again a hale and hearty old lady when we saw her.

They entertained us with tea, cigarettes and biscuits ; the cigarettes they rolled with the tips of their henna-stained fingers, and while we were there, two most attractive ladies came to visit them. There are several of these homes in the town where ex-slaves and destitute women take refuge.

March 11th.

As the owner of a deer forest in the Highlands of Scotland where I do some stalking on my own account, I am anxious to learn what sport is to be had in this land of waterless wastes where the elusive oryx is supposed to roam. In the spring of 1914, I had been shown a stuffed specimen in the Museum at Beyrout and was then told that the Bedouins mounted on their *deluls* (swift riding camels) chase the herd when sighted, riding them down and then shoot at close quarters from their couched camels. My host mentioned a dead oryx he found in the Rub al Khali as the only one he had come across in his long trek. I could glean no information excepting that mythical herds have been reported farther North in the direction of the great red sand desert of the Nefud. Near the creek we often disturbed large numbers of duck and occasionally the desert hare which, like the gazelle, is sometimes hunted with the aid of the Saluki, the Arabian greyhound. Given a fair chance the Saluki seldom fails to bring his quarry down, as he is very fast. A well-bred one is a beautiful animal, especially when moving, docile and gentle as a pet, but rather stupid except in the hunt when he is all alert. Hawking is popular among the upper classes. The falcons come from Persia. They are expensive and in these days few can afford the luxury.

The King keeps a celebrated stud of thoroughbred horses and mares at his capital El Riyad in Nejd and there indulges in racing. One is glad to think the austere life of the Wahhabi People is occasionally brightened by sport, as all forms of amusement, such as dancing, singing, smoking and music are forbidden and these Puritans look with horror on all who indulge in any one of them. Poetry and song have always held a large place in the life of the Arab, he is a poet by nature and loves to sing on the long marches. Let us hope time will lessen the scowl of the Ikhwan and soften their hearts towards their brother Moslem and teach them tolerance; at the same time we can but admire in the Wahhabi the purity of his faith and his strict adherence to his convictions.

March 12th.

To-day the news has come through that I am permitted to do the pilgrimage to Mecca and visit Medina. I had for so long lived in alternate fits of hope and despair, that I can scarcely credit that my great wish is at last to be fulfilled. Preparations for my journey are in the hands of my host, who is returning to Mecca and notwithstanding his many preoccupations, is giving up much time and trouble arranging for my comfort and the many details that require consideration; while I prepare to get ready my pilgrim dress, which consists of

a black crêpe skirt, very full, and a cape and hood in one, to be worn over ordinary dress when I visit Medina, also a black crêpe veil entirely obscuring my features ; but for Mecca I shall be entirely in white, no colour allowed in any garment. As the official days of pilgrimage at Mecca, do not begin till 4th April, I arrange to go first to Medina. The only money this country accepts is gold or the clumsy silver Real,¹ so I ask my friend, Mr. Jacobs, to cash me a cheque and am given two hundred golden sovereigns engraved with King George's head. The coins look beautiful, it is many years since I have seen their like, and I am sorry for several reasons when the time comes to part with them.

March 14th.

All is ready for my journey. Medina is two hundred and fifty miles away and as there is no road it is doubtful if I can get there in a day. My hostess is lending me a pillow and blanket as I shall have probably to sleep in the desert occasionally ; also a luncheon basket with cold chicken, eggs and bread, and a bottle of soda water. Tea I can get on the road : at every *caravanseraï* there are glasses of excellent tea, green or red to your liking, also lemons or mint which I prefer to the milk of the goat.

¹ Maria Theresa dollar.

My Arabic master, Abu Bekr Nazir, whose brother accompanies me to Medina, gives me a final examination in the ritual necessary for my pilgrimage. I try on my Arab dress and learn to adjust the veil. The friends I have made since my arrival come to wish me good-bye and good luck. My host is in Mecca ; my hostess insists on rising at dawn to-morrow to bid me farewell, though I try to dissuade her. I go to bed but am too excited to sleep.

MEDINA

I

MEDINA

March 15th.

WE started for Medina after the Dawn Prayer. I had hired a car for the twenty days of pilgrimage, with an Arab driver who knew the road and was accompanied by Mustapha Nazir, a very urbane personage lent me by Mr. Philby, who combined the duties of equerry and courier, and proved invaluable. Also a nice old Sudanese, father of the cook, who had come from Dongola to do the pilgrimage and wanted to kiss my feet when I offered him a lift to Medina.

It was a lovely dawn, the sun rising over the hills soon after we left Jeddah in a splendour of conflagration making the shadow of rock and bush stretch blue as indigo to the West. We sped northward through mile after mile of flat desert, where grew a few thorny bushes and a shrub with a yellow flower like a cistus. The road was marked by the whitened bones of dead camels that strewed the path of countless thousands of pilgrims who had trod that way for over a thousand years. No living thing was to be seen, except now and

then some sand grouse and, once, a flight of flamingoes.

After a time the face of the desert seemed to change; clumps of palm trees showed in the distance; occasionally we passed a goatherd with a flock of goats, and once a herd of camels, old and young, were nibbling at the thorny scrub; the herbage was less scanty, and an occasional tree gave shade. We were now travelling through an undulating lowland country, partly cultivated, and here and there were dotted a few wigwam-like structures of matting on poles, the primitive homes of these shepherds of the Tihama plain, which can be easily moved when the grazing gives out, or the water supply fails. One hut houses a family, and as all are within the degree of relationship which the Koran forbids to intermarry, there is no attempt to separate the sexes. In a corner is a rickety "serir" on which the parents sleep, and the rest of the family on the ground. Some gourds of sour milk, a coffee pot of blackened fire-proof clay, and tall conical baskets of coloured straw ornamented with cowrie shells, complete the furniture of the simple home. The entrance can be closed with a piece of matting, very necessary in view of the frequent dust storms, and as there are no windows, one imagines the inmates must suffer from want of air, but on hot nights they sleep in the open. The black hair tents of the inland Nomads

are seldom seen on the sea coast of the Tihama plain.

Our first halt was at Rhabigh, where we entered the forbidden territory, and passports were examined. Here we took an hour's rest; a third of our journey was accomplished, but the worst of the road was ahead. Rhabigh is a seaport which, during the Hedjaz war, largely took the place of Jeddah as the port for Mecca for the landing of the pilgrims, but the town is two miles from the sea, and the mud brick houses are scattered over a flat plain without any attempt at order. Near the market place is a collection of open-fronted booths, roofed in with rushes or palm fronds, where the pilgrims can sit at ease, or lie full length to sleep on rude couches. There were already several of them stretched in slumber on their "serirs", where they will spend the hot hours ahead, leaving again in the cool of the evening.

In the market is the usual display of foodstuffs, crushed dates, rice, and samn, a form of clarified butter, also a small fish, ready fried, which is much appreciated by the pilgrims. These fishes are netted in large quantities in the shallow waters of the adjacent sea.

Another form of food that looked singularly unappetising, was "sawik," a dish composed of green grain toasted, pounded, and mixed with dates, which appeals to the pilgrim, because a very small

quantity will sustain life for a long period, and for this reason the Bedouin will supply himself with it, when on the march.

A few of the Bedouin girls crowded round the car, trying to sell me baskets of plaited grass of brilliant colours and other primitive articles which they make specially for trade with the pilgrims. When I refused to buy, they were not in the least put out, but ran off to try their blandishments on the slumbering hadjis.

I was taken to a white-washed house outside the village belonging to the chief inhabitant. Like most Arab dwellings it presented a blank face to the street, its privacy being further enhanced by the high walls. His wife and mother welcomed me into a cool room opening on to a garden, in which were folded mattresses, where they slept during the night. It was a relief to lift my veil and I found everywhere on my pilgrimage I was, because of my fairness, regarded as Turkish. I did not trouble to contradict the impression.

A short time before we reached Rhabigh we had stopped to partake of an early lunch so I was quite satisfied with the water melon they brought me as I was very thirsty. The wife of the chief inhabitant was a pretty woman of a pale mahogany colour with great brown eyes and small delicate features. Her three little children were very nicely turned out, without any sign of flies round their

eyes, as so many children suffer from in hot climates.

While I rested the car was supplied with water and benzine, two absolute necessities of which it was impossible to carry enough for the journey. Also Mustapha was able to smoke his beloved narghileh in some secret recess where the Police could not sniff the forbidden fumes, and our driver Suleiman, who had often been this way before, chatted with his many friends.

On leaving Rhabigh we passed fields of water melons, and some large groves of palms, but after crossing a dry river-bed we again found ourselves in the arid desert, and now the sun poured down on us in a relentless cruelty. Arabia possesses no rivers, but after the heavy rains that all too rarely descend on her aridity, the wadys (valleys) become for a few short hours foaming torrents.

On we travelled through the dusty dunes, the measureless wastes, in a haze of heat which quivered and glowed under a cloudless sky where shortly appeared phantom lakes, dream mysteries of the desert, forming a remarkable contrast to the arid plain. Many a poor wanderer has been mocked by this mirage which the Bedouin has well named Bahar Shaitan (Satan's water). In the Old Testament this desert mirage is alluded to by the prophet Isaiah (xxxv. 7), "And the Serab shall become a real

lake." The Arabs still use the word Serab when describing a mirage.

After many hours we reached some foothills and quickly found ourselves in a valley with great mountains on either side. We had turned East, and gently mounted a sandy road which sometimes narrowed to a deep gorge and then opened out into a panorama of high mountains as far as the eye could see. These mountains were of red sandstone which took on gorgeous colours in the distance, especially at sunset when they glowed crimson and orange, but on nearer acquaintance they were the extreme of aridity and desolation. Yet a shower of rain will make this arid waste a garden of perfume where the ephemeral flowers of the desert clothe the naked dunes for a few short hours with diminutive blossoms emitting a wild strange fragrance. The tiny crusafer with its purple head and radiating foliage, the wild mignonette, the little yellow pea flower and the blue salvia pluckily take root in the sand, while mesembrianthemums make a brave show with their large mauve waxy leaves and the rest harrow becomes a sheet of golden bloom when not eaten down by the gazelle or passing camel. Also the Jerusalem sage is frequently to be met with in the rills of sand that intersect the stony soil. Alas! how brief is their little life. Under the scorching sun they vanish to lift their small faces bravely once more when Heaven sends them rain.

Here among these hills were human inhabitants who evidently found life a difficult problem, judging from their emaciated appearance: it was heart-rending to see the children who were living skeletons.

They ran beside the slowly moving car imploring help with a menacing persistence that to my mind boded ill if we should have a breakdown; their shrill voices held a curse when I ignored their appeal for alms.

There was something very forbidding about these Bedouins; the women being veiled, one only saw their sullen eyes, but the men were sinister figures with scowling faces. They belonged to the tribe of Harb, which has always lived by pillage and it was from them that the Shereefian army was largely recruited by Hussein the Shereef of Mecca who was crowned King of the Hedjaz after he defeated the Turks, driving them out of Arabia, only in his turn to be driven out a few years later by Ibn Sa'ud the Ruler of Nejd.

The present King has succeeded in putting an end to this desert brigandage and in consequence this tribe has lost its chief means of livelihood; at the same time they dare not do mischief, for fear of the King's swift retribution.

When our road was fairly smooth and Suleiman was not engaged in lifting the car out of one bunker only to fall shortly into another, he would beguile

the time with song. In a monotonous nasal voice that was not without its attraction he crooned away and I was able with the help of Mustapha to get a rough translation of one song that began in the following manner :

A garden surrounded by cypresses is like young girls clad in green silk delineating their charming figures and the wind comes swaying them ; they look as though longing for embraces and are prevented by shyness.

There were several more verses, but the meaning became so involved that I forbore to question Mustapha further.

Strings of camels met us as the afternoon wore on, carrying intending pilgrims in Shubreyahs of wickerwork lined with cushions and rugs, in which three people can ride abreast on the camel's hump, covered by a hood which protects them from the wind and sun. The beasts came swaying onward with a drowsy motion, like the rocking of a ship at rest upon a tranquil sea. Possibly the swaying movement is soothing, as when it grew dark, white curtains were let down in front and the occupants evidently slept. We passed many hundreds of these camels, tied nose to tail, moving with slender out-stretched necks and slow fastidious steps through the shifting sand while here and there a camel driver guided the party.

On leaving the Medina Gate at Jeddah and

several times on the way our passports were examined by the Wahhabi Police who patrol the pilgrim route, and keep it safe for those who use it, as was never done before, when the poor pilgrim was often robbed of all his possessions and left to die.

The two hundred and fifty miles from Jeddah to Medina took us fifteen hours to accomplish and I take off my hat to the little Ford that gallantly carried us through those sandy wastes: only once did Mustapha and the old Sudanese have to get out and push when we stuck in a particularly deep drift. Besides the pilgrims on camels, we met many on foot, toiling slowly through the scorching desert with water jugs in their hands clad in their Ihram (or two towels), and, as they were bareheaded, many carried umbrellas.

Ten days is the usual time it takes a camel to accomplish the journey between Medina and Jeddah and three weeks for the pilgrim on foot, who generally travels at night, resting in the heat of the day at one of the numerous *caravanserais* where he can obtain food, water, coffee, tea and a rush couch on which to sleep.

Also we occasionally met an omnibus carrying intending pilgrims and luggage tightly packed, cooking utensils and water jugs tied on anywhere and the noise and clatter must have been most trying as they bumped over the rough ground.

We rested at sunset at Messajeed, the last station

before reaching Medina. A large white house at the foot of the hills was the new hotel built for pilgrims but still unfinished. I was allowed to occupy a room in it which was but four white-washed walls, with a ceiling of palm trunks, and a window with wooden shutters (glass is unnecessary in this climate) and for the floor the desert sand. It was cool and clean, and though it still lacked a door, I spread my blanket and was soon asleep. In an hour we once more took the road, as there was still another thirty miles to do.

Night comes very swiftly when the sun sets, but our car carried good lights, very necessary in view of the track we had to follow which gradually grew worse and worse. There was no moon, but the mountains showed clear against the starlit sky. Silently camels passed us like ghosts bearing the pilgrims South. Also strings of camels carrying merchandise and sheaves of corn, looking like white feathers in the starlight.

We halted once again when two policemen stopped us with flashlights, and after the Arab greeting of peace warned us that it had rained for three days and the road was under water. We thanked them and proceeded by another sandy track which also led us to water. Our driver got out and waded in it to his knees, but returned to say that the bottom was hard and he thought the Ford could do it. The little car did not fail us,



BAB ES-SALAM (DOOR OF PEACE),
THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE, MEDINA



MEDINA, SHOWING WALL

and after another hour we saw lights in the distance. They were the lights of Medina-el-Manoura, the Illumined City. . . . Suleiman had entered there before, but to three of us it was a momentous event—the final fulfilment of a great hope.

I veiled myself closely and soon we reached the “Bab-el-Anbariyeh”, the Gateway into the Holy City, where our car stopped and lights were flashed on us from all sides, questions asked and our passports examined. Mine gave my name as Saidah Zainab, and the Viceroy of Mecca’s order that I was free to enter the forbidden Territories. It was now 10 o’clock European time, and I only discovered later that it was long past the hour when the gates were closed, but the Emir of Medina had warned the police to admit me whenever I arrived.

A man appeared who evidently had orders to meet me, and we entered the sleeping city accompanied by our new friend who guided our driver through endless gateways and silent streets, till we reached an arch too narrow for our car to pass. Here I was told to descend and follow him. He walked so fast that I, hampered by my Arab clothes, lost him among the draped figures in the dim alley through which we made our way, and I feared to raise my veil. Not knowing his name I called “Ya Hamid,” and he turned back to me. I was careful not to lose him again.

At length we stopped at the door of a tall house,

and he rapped the handle loudly—it seemed to echo through the silence. Three times did he rap that handle and shout before there came an answering voice, while I stood shivering with tiredness and fright—alone with a stranger in the dead of night, an alien in a Sacred City. When at last the door opened a charming old man bade us enter, apologising for the delay, as they had given up expecting us until the following morning. He led me up some steep stairs, while my guide returned to the car to fetch my belongings, and let Mustapha know that all was well.

My room was a large one, empty except for some fine rugs and the many divans round it. On the walls hung illuminated texts from the Koran and leading to it was a smaller room also at my disposal. A little slave brought me tea and sour milk in a bowl to be eaten with salt or sugar according to taste. The tea was most welcome as I was parched with thirst.

When my luggage arrived I was far too sleepy to unpack and, spreading my pillow and blanket on a divan I prepared to lie down, when Mustapha came to tell me the Muzawwir whose duty it was to conduct me to the Mosque and teach me the ceremonial, was downstairs waiting to be received. I longed to make some excuse, but remembering that a visitor's first duty on entering the Holy City is to visit the Mosque before breaking fast or sleep-

ing, I felt bound to see the gentleman. I hastily veiled, while Mustapha ushered in a tall stately Arab, who showed himself quite accommodating, and I arranged to visit the Mosque with him for the Dawn Prayer the following morning. Realising that this would barely allow me five hours' sleep, I lay down, and as my eyes closed I heard, through the open window an intending pilgrim reading the Koran in a deep sonorous tone, so clear that I could distinguish the words and recognised he was reciting the Surah "Youssouf." I fell asleep to the sound of the magic words and the cadence of the voice.

March 16th.

I awoke at dawn to hear the Azzan, the Muezzin's call to prayer, and through a small window looking South I dimly saw the tall minarets and the green dome of the Prophet's Tomb, and was glad to think how close I was to the Mosque so venerated by Islam. I did my ablutions and hastened down to meet my Muzawwir whose task it is to take the visitor to the sacred places and say the ritual which he or she repeats after him.

Closely veiled I follow the Muzawwir to the Mosque. Out of the confusion of narrow streets I passed to a wide space and through a great gate into a court of arches filled with the radiance of the sunrise and the cooing of doves. Before me

rose the green dome of the Tomb resplendent like an emerald against the grape-blue sky of early morning.

A thrill went through me as I shed my shoes and crossed the threshold that few Western men and no Western woman had ever crossed before, and entered the splendid Temple which was enlarged by the Sultan Abd-el-Majid of Turkey about ninety years ago. I followed my guide past countless pillars of red sandstone quarried from the adjacent hills supporting domed roofs, the ceilings painted in a design of red and blue and threaded my way among the worshippers till we reached the *Raoudah* where I performed my Dawn Prayer of two *Rekaats* (prostrations).

There were many worshippers, which did not detract from the sense of peace that pervaded the great Mosque, perhaps enhanced by the chanting of the Koran which ceases not, day or night, within the sacred precincts.

I was then taken to the Tomb of the Prophet; here the crowd was dense and, though saluting with religious fervour, they offered no prayer there, Muhammed having said "O God! let not my tomb be worshipped," and again "May Allah curse the Jews and Nazarenes for that they have taken the tombs of their Prophets as places of worship. Beware ye of what they have done."

The salutation allowed at the Prophet's Tomb

is the following, which I repeated after the Muzawwir :

In the name of Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate blessing and peace on thee O best of mankind. Illuminator of Darkness, Messenger of Allah the Omniscient. Blessings and Peace O our Lord, our Prophet, our Beloved. O Messenger of Allah blessings and peace on thee, thou whom Allah girded with the sword of victory, O thou foremost of Allah's created beings and seal of Allah's messengers, we come to thee, we have sought thee and now we stand before thy door. Blessings and Peace on thee and Praise to Allah Lord of all the Worlds.

After repeating the above I looked through the grille to where the body of the great Arabian Prophet lies, but could see nothing but a curtain some feet away from the railings. Gone are the jewels and treasures that once hung above the tomb. They were taken by the last Turkish Governor of Medina, and sent to Enver Pasha and Talaat Pasha in Constantinople during the war. It would indeed be a very gracious gesture on the part of the present rulers of Turkey, who are on the friendliest terms with King Ibn Sa'ud and Sa'udi Arabia, if they were to atone for the sin of their predecessors and restore the jewels to the shrine.

Close to the Tomb of the Prophet lie the graves of Abu Bakr and Omar where we again saluted. After that we visited the house where lived Fatima,

the daughter of the Prophet, once more repeating a salutation. Then I was shown the spot where the Angel Gabriel descended and listened to the Prophet reciting the Koran. The Mosque was quite small in the days of Muhammed, and the "Raoudah-el-Mustapha" (the luxuriant Garden of the Prophet) marks the original size. It is considered part of Paradise, and one prayer there counts more than a thousand elsewhere, excepting only in the Haram of Mecca. In the Raoudah is Beit Muhammed where once stood the house where the Prophet spent his last years and died. A short distance away outside the Raoudah lived his father-in-law, Abu Bakr.

Now the Mosque encloses them both, but in those days there was a garden to be crossed when Abu Bakr visited his beloved son-in-law and Prophet.

The original Mosque, where now stands the Raoudah, was built of bricks and earth, and roofed in with palm leaves, and Muhammed himself helped in its erection, carrying the bricks and laying them in place, for he believed in the dignity of labour and recommended agriculture and commerce as meritorious in the sight of heaven, holding idleness in horror.

Since those days Khaliphs and Sultans have rebuilt and enlarged the Mosque and dowered it with much beauty. The Kiblas are very fine, they point the way to Mecca for the pilgrims, and here the

Imam stands on Friday to lead the prayers. The Holy Niche in the centre of the Raoudah marks the spot where once the Prophet stood, while among others the Kiblas of Sultans Suleiman and Osman stand out as gems of beauty. They are delicately wrought of inlaid marble and verses from the Koran in the decorative Arabic script are engraved on the walls that surround them, also a frieze of old tiles runs round the Raoudah and the centuries have taken nothing from their wonderful colouring.

As the Prophet prohibited the portrayal of the human figure or the drawings of living beings, because of their association with idolatrous worship, the art of the Arabesque was introduced for decoration, and gradually, with the insertion of flowers, birds and fruit, it grew into a very beautiful conception with a character all its own. For gracefulness and symmetry, for purity of form, simplicity of outline and exquisite finish, it stands alone and has been widely copied and adopted by Western civilisation.

Another branch of decorative art of the Arabs is the ornamental writing which is used with marvellous effect on the adornment of their Mosques and palaces, carved or inlaid on doors, arches, minarets and domes, also in the illumination of their missals, many of the Korans being masterpieces of loveliness.

The gates leading into the Mosque are many and

beautiful. Though a camera is forbidden, I have, through the kindness of my friend, Sid Ahmed Es-Said, been presented with some photographs of Medina, its Mosques and its places of interest, that are unique: and the same friend has generously given me photographs of Mecca and the Haram which I value greatly.

There are five minarets to the Mosque, and at the time of prayer five Muezzins simultaneously call the Azzan, one starting the call with "Allahu Akbar" (God is greater than all), then a voice rings out from each minaret to the North, East, South and West, and all the City prostrates in prayer.

Shortly after my return to the house I found several visitors come to welcome me; the Pasha of Meknes who travelled with me from Suez to Jeddah and was leaving for Mecca the following morning, also two sheikhs I had known in Egypt, and a gentleman of Medina, Sid Ahmed Es-Said, a friend of Mustapha Nazir, whose gentle charm won my sympathy at once, and whose knowledge of the City and the surrounding country did much to make my sojourn in Medina interesting and instructive. I unveiled when in my room as most of my guests were old friends. After the many Arab salutations of peace and blessing and polite enquiries after my health, they wish to know what are my impressions of the Sacred City and its Mosque. We then discuss the destruction of the

tombs of Muhammed's family and friends, of which I have already heard so often, although I have not as yet seen the mutilated shrines. All agreed that though praying at the Tombs was not according to the Prophet's teaching, the Wahhabis in their desire to revive the pristine purity of Islam as taught by the Koran, had been too ruthless in their methods. Surely some other way could have been found to stop this practice of the ignorant. But they forgot that it was Muhammed who laid down the rule that graves should be level with the ground.

After drinking tea in small glasses with handles, and then unsweetened coffee served in china cups in filigree stands, they bid me farewell, and I sat down to record a few of my impressions of the new life opening before me.

March 17th.

This morning I was engaged in writing up my Diary when I heard that some ladies were below waiting to see me. On being told they belonged to the family of an old friend in Damascus I was glad to welcome them; and after unveiling and getting rid of their cloaks and hoods they distributed themselves on the divans. There were five of them, the wife of my friend in Damascus, a very attractive personality, with a sweet expression; her sister with two young daughters and another lady of a cheerful frame of mind, whose gay laugh infected

us all. My hostess, the wife of the gentleman in whose house I was a guest, had already greeted me, and she returned to help me entertain them with tea and later with the unsweetened Mocha coffee.

On removing their outer garments of the inevitable black silk or satin these ladies were dressed in full trousers hanging in folds that fit tight below the calf of the leg, and are very becoming to slim figures. They are generally made of striped silk or cotton, and a tight-fitting bodice with long sleeves is worn above, and over the whole hangs a loose transparent dress of white gauze. A piece of coloured silk is wound round like a turban on the head, with one end hanging down to the shoulder. Their hair hangs in two long plaits down their backs, very often twisted with gay ribbons or ropes of seed pearls. Powder and rouge is unknown—but they all have their eyes blackened with kohl—which they tell me softens the glare of the sun; as a rule they have lovely teeth and carry themselves well.

They were very interested in hearing of my country and the lives we women live, and asked me innumerable questions about our emancipation and our right to enter parliament and share in the government of our land. Also they enquire when and why I had become a Moslem and on my admitting that I could read and write Arabic, I was taken to the texts hanging on the walls and asked to read them. Luckily I was able to do so; even the

Surah (Chapter) "Ya Sin" which was written in the tiniest characters and embodied in the letters of Ya Sin, I could decipher as I knew that Surah by heart. Only two of my guests were able to read, although they all seemed very intelligent and well educated in other respects. They certainly were attractive little ladies and I shall hope one day to meet them again, especially Fatima the wife of Sid Ahmed es Said, who, like her husband, was possessed with charm and sweetness of character.

When at midday I heard the Azzan I told them I was going to the Mosque to pray and asked them to accompany me; they excused themselves, and on my return I found them praying in my room. I then invited them to lunch, and warned Mustapha who occupied the room below that the ladies were remaining and to order more food. We all sat round a large tray on which were dishes of spiced meat and vegetables which we ate with our fingers and the aid of a spoon. Afterwards a slave entered with a ewer and basin and soft towels and we proceeded to wash our hands as she poured the water over them. The same scrupulous cleansing of the hands was done before we sat down to eat.

As I did not wish to forgo my midday sleep and the ladies showed no sign of departing, I asked their permission to rest, which was readily accorded. I lay down on my blanket and slept, to find on waking they were still there in deep conversation with my

hostess, for the custom of the Arab ladies is to spend the entire day on a visit. So, as the afternoon drew on, I left my guests chatting away happily with her, for I wished to explore the Sacred City.

Accompanied by Mustapha I went on foot through the streets and bazaars with a strange feeling of exhilaration that I was the only European in the whole City. Though Mecca is the goal of every pilgrim, Medina is the City that gave shelter to the Prophet when forced to fly for his life from the wrath of his relations. In the beginning of his mission Muhammed opened his soul only to those who were attached to him, numbering among his first converts, his wife, Khadijah, and his young cousin, Ali, who eventually became his son-in-law. For some weary months he laboured quietly to wean his people from the worship of idols, but polytheism was deeply rooted in them.

Three years after he received the divine revelation in the cave of Hira, he was commanded by the Angel Gabriel to preach the truth publicly. "O Apostle publish the whole of that which has been sent down unto thee from thy Lord."—*Koran*, v, 67. Muhommed knew that he would arouse a powerful opposition, especially among his own family the Koreish, who as hereditary guardians of the idols of the Kaaba had vested interests in the old worship, and the forsaking of his quiet honoured way of life was disturbing to his sensitive mind; but

conquering his diffidence he slew a sheep and invited his relations to a feast, addressing them, "Children of Abd al Mutalib! God has commanded me to call you unto Him . . . there is no God but He . . . who will act as my brother and helper?" A minute or two of horrified silence was followed by an outburst of hostility and the entire company departed in anger.

Nothing daunted the Prophet publicly addressed his tribe from the mount of Safa, summoning them by the battle cry of the Koreish: "Behold the Morning! Bani Fihir! Bani Adi! Bani Makhzoom!"

When all had assembled he cried: "If I told you that horsemen were in the valley ready to attack you, would you believe me?"

"Yes," they answered, "we have never known you lie."

"O ye Koreishites gathered here! Redeem your own souls, listen to what I am commanded to tell you." . . .

Then uprose Abu Lahab, a very fiery red-headed person, nick-named the Father of Flame from his choleric temperament, who shouted: "May you be cursed for the rest of your life—why gather us together for trifles like this?"

Muhammed looked at his uncle and growing very pale while trembling as if with cold he spoke,

but it was the Angel of Wrath who gave utterance to the words: "Perdition overtake both hands of the father of the flame and he will perish. His wealth and what he earns will not avail him, he shall soon burn in fire that flames."—*Koran, cxi.*

After this the prophet suffered much persecution, and insults were hurled at him in the public street, while Amr, the fashionable poet of the day, belaboured his teachings with epigrams and cruel satire. (Yet this young man was destined one day to become an ardent Moslem and the future conqueror of Egypt.)

In spite of the hostility of the Meccan aristocracy and his powerful relations, Muhammed made many converts among the citizens and those who came on pilgrimage to the Kaaba, and when they dispersed to their distant homes they carried with them the news of the advent of a preacher who at the risk of his life was calling aloud to the tribes of Arabia to give up the worship of their idols. "O ye children of Koreish—do ye take me to be true or false? If ye consider me to be true, will you harken to what I shall say. The Caravan of our life will one day surely depart hence. Beware ye of the time when death shall attack. All in their turn will leave you, whether it be your relations or belongings. If there be any bliss remaining with you it is the good which ye have done in your life,

—God alone is worthy of praise, His Name is worthy of repetition, His Thought is worthy of contemplation—His Command is worthy of obedience, and His Majesty is worthy of service. When ye think, think only on Him, when you bow, bow only before Him, trust Him alone, fear Him alone, and serve Him alone. No one lives outside of Him, none can be compared with Him. The wise and the foolish are both speechless before Him. The sun and the moon are motionless in His Presence—Mighty Kings are submissive before His exalted Majesty—The righteous and the pious are abashed in His presence, neither the hermit nor the orthodox has any power in His Kingdom. Neither the ascetic nor the mystic has a voice in His Court—Therefore count not on a mediator between you and your God.”¹

As long as his uncle Abu Talib lived, though the old man never embraced the faith, he protected his nephew to whom he was very devoted. But when the patriarch died, the persecution increased to such an extent that the Prophet was no longer able to defend his disciples, several of whom suffered martyrdom. So in the early days of Islam he urged them to escape to Abyssinia where reigned a very enlightened and pious sovereign, who welcomed the fugitives and gave them asylum.

In the following year the inhabitants of Yathrib,

¹ Sermon of the Prophet on Mount Safa referred to on p. 53.

of whom several had embraced the New Faith, offered the Prophet shelter in their City from his relentless persecutors, and though he considered it his duty to remain on in Mecca, he advised his followers to emigrate to the Northern City in preference to Abyssinia and thus remain in their own country. As the population rapidly became converts to Islam, Yathrib changed its name to Medinet-en-Nebi (the City of the Prophet), now commonly known as Medina.

Every now and then in obedience to Muhammed's request a few Moslems left Mecca with their families to settle in the Northern City and at last there only remained the Prophet, his devoted cousin Ali and his venerable friend Abu Bakr, with his two young daughters, Ayesha and Asma, the elder of whom eventually became the wife of the Prophet.

For thirteen long years, at the sacrifice of his comfort and fortune Muhammed remained at his post and he was prepared, though fifty years old, to make fresh sacrifices. But receiving what he believed to be a divine command he prepared to escape to Yathrib, where the many converts to Islam were prepared to give him welcome.

Having arrived at that decision it must have been a solemn moment when Muhammed, accompanied by one companion, Abu Bakr, stole forth in the night and fled to the hills from the treachery of his fellow-citizens. Fate had indeed stepped in to save

the Prophet, for that very night the Meccans had decided to assassinate him. A few hours earlier they held a meeting when a number of courageous young men arranged to seize him and simultaneously plunge their swords in his breast to avoid any one man exposing himself and his family to the vengeance of blood, but when these heroes surrounded the Prophet's house with the intention of killing him when he came out in the early morning, he and Abu Bakr were already many miles away and Ali remained alone, to the disconcertion and fury of the idolaters.

Meanwhile the fugitives had hidden themselves in a cavern on Mount Thaur which lies to the south of Mecca, where they proposed spending a few days while the pursuit lasted, though it seemed as if nothing short of a miracle could save them from a whole City bent on capturing them, and skilled in tracking.

Amir ben Fohaira, a freedman of Abu Bakr, under pretence of leading his flock to pasture supplied them with a milk-giving ewe. Then followed two anxious days while the Koreish explored the countryside. Once when Abu Bakr was on guard he heard voices. Armed men on camels were searching the hill and meeting a shepherd they enquired for news of the fugitives. Pointing in the direction of the cave the man answered: "Perhaps they are hidden there; it is a likely place."

Abu Bakr was terrified.

"What can we two do against so many?" he asked and Muhammed quietly replied: "Fear naught, Allah is with us."

A spider was spreading its intricate web across the mouth of the cave and a white dove was cooing at the entrance. Peace reigned in that tiny corner of the world and the pursuers, seeing the dove and the spider's web, did not trouble to enter.

As the sound of their footsteps died away, the Prophet cried: "Praise be to God! God is greater than all."

That night Amir ben Fohaira arrived at the cave with two camels and provisions for the journey and mounting their beasts the fugitives set out in a northerly direction, zigzagging towards the Red Sea to avoid the direct route. All night they travelled and part of the next day, till the intense heat made it imperative to stop. They found shelter under a rock and slept while the camels fed on the thorny vegetation.

The Koreish had offered a reward of a hundred camels to anyone who would bring back Muhammed alive or dead and news travels fast in the desert. A mounted Bedouin found them and recognized the Prophet. He was armed and resolved to win the prize, but as he advanced, his horse stumbled and threw him heavily at the feet of Muhammed, who, seeing his distress, spoke to him kindly, and the

Bedouin, stricken with awe, prayed for forgiveness and went his way ashamed.

The fugitives continued their flight to Yathrib, and after seven days' travelling through desert dunes they reached the volcanic region with its plains of black lava, its mountains coloured in blue basalt and red sandstone, its little springs surrounded by many thorny acacias or palms. At length they entered a more smiling land, a fertile hill covered in gardens and vineyards, the sound of running water. They were approaching Kouba, a suburb of Yathrib, and they knew the blessed relief that they were beyond all danger. On the 12th Rabi, the end of their flight, a new era dawned for Islam. From this Flight (Hegira) dates the Moslem Calendar.

The houses of Medina are not decorated with the carved wooden balconies and shutters that are such a feature of Jeddah architecture, but the coolness in the shade of the covered bazaars, and the colour in the sunshine of the streets, the brilliant hue of the children's frocks and the gold and brown Abbas worn over the white robes of the men make a charming picture.

"As-salaam aleikum," those gentle words of greeting each other as they pass, is music to the ear.

It is amusing to watch the dexterity with which two friends will sustain a competition in greeting; each one endeavouring to outdo the other in com-

pliments, in obedience to the command, "If ye are greeted with a greeting, then greet ye with a better greeting or at least return it. Allah taketh count of all things." *Koran. Sura iv—verse 88.*

The following is the salutation invariably in use :
 "As salaam aleikum" (Peace be upon you).
 And "With you be peace and the mercy of God and His blessing." "May your day be blessed."
 "May your property be increased."

Master and servant, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlettered, greet each other with the same dignity on both sides, leading to no loss of self-respect to either.

No colour or race prejudice exists in Islam. Brown, black, yellow and white people mingle in the marts, Mosques, and palaces upon a footing of complete equality and friendliness. . . . And what joyousness of life, what content on their faces compared to the unrest one meets in Europe ! These people appear quite independent of our cares of life, our fear of death ; and no one perishes of hunger or exposure in the cities of Islam or begs in vain for bread.¹

There is no craving for excitement where there is no unrest to stifle. As the shadows lengthen and the hour of prayer arrives, they repair to the Mosque or their houses for their devotions. Later in the evening, in the corner of the market or the

¹ *The Cultural Side of Islam*, by M. Pickthall.

open square, you may see a small crowd gathered in the twilight to listen to the story-teller.

This ancient profession has always been popular in the East, though the Cinema and Theatre have almost driven it out of modernised cities like Algiers or Cairo ; but I remember seeing groups of eager Moors listening to the entrancing tales of the story-teller in the Jama el F'na at Marrakesh and here in Medina I find him again. He may be relating the "Stealing of the Mare" or portions of the "Thousand and One Nights" or the thrilling tale of "Antar the pre-Islamic hero poet," but always he stops short at the most exciting moment, leaving his hearers to await with what patience they can for the continuance of the tale on the ensuing evening.

Many people regard the "Thousand and One Nights" as the standard work of Arabian fiction, but there exists many cycle stories as voluminous and equally exciting and instructive, and perhaps more marvellous in their wealth of imagination which have not yet been translated for the benefit of the Western reader. The late Mr. Wilfred Blunt in the "Stealing of the Mare" has given us a great part of the Story Cycle of Abu Zeid, and I am hoping that the translation of the romance of Saif ibn Zi Yazen, the patriarch who brought the Nile to Cairo, is under consideration and may give as much pleasure to its readers in Europe and America

as it has done to the audiences who have from time immemorial sat enthralled in the markets and street corners of the East.

Nowadays the repertoire of the story-teller has been added to by an epic of modern times ; the heroic deeds of the present King of Arabia. The life of Abd el Azziz Ibn Sa'ud makes a wonderful theme which the story-teller seizes on with avidity.

By the light of the camp fires in the desert, or the flare of the torches in the coffee-house, the audience listen spell-bound to the thrilling tale of the young Prince banished from his country when eleven years old, his father having lost the throne of Nejd ; of how he spent eight years' exile in Koweit, the seaport on the Persian Gulf, homesick for the mountains of his native land and how when barely nineteen years of age he returned with forty kinsmen to his country and by one of the most daring feats in the annals of war he recaptured Riyad, the capital of his lost kingdom and seized the reins of power. Of how in time he fought and vanquished the Ottoman troops, the powerful Emir Ibn Rashid, Lord of Hail, and the late King Hussein of the Hedjaz.

The story-teller proceeds with his narrative of this modern saga, more wonderful than any fairy tale of old ; of how this intrepid Prince has shown a genius for government equal to his genius in battle ; of how he harnessed the desert tribes in a friendly

brotherhood, the "Ikhwan," and put an end to brigandage and lawlessness in perhaps what was the most lawless country in the world, and now reigns supreme over Arabia from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, holding the custody of the sacred Cities of Mecca and Medina, which constitutes him the Real Protector of Islam.

The Emir Ibn Rashid was killed in battle and the survivors of the family were taken to the King's Palace at Riyad, where they now live surrounded by comfort; and all honour and deference paid them, but they are very carefully guarded and virtually prisoners in all but name. Hussein fled to Cyprus and eventually died at Amman, the capital of Transjordan where Abdalla his son reigns as Emir.

March 18th.

As I had not yet received permission from the Emir to use my car in the City, I, accompanied by Mustapha, his friend, Sid Ahmed es Said and my Muzawwir, walked to the Bakieh or Cemetery which is just outside the walls of the town, and only a few hundred yards from the Prophet's Mosque.

Though it was only two o'clock (Arab time), i.e. two hours after sunrise, the sun was already scorching as we emerged from the cool recess of the deep gateway into this great sepulchre of the dead.

Here were buried about ten thousand of the

Ashab or Companions of the Prophet, besides innumerable Sayyids whose graves are forgotten.

I entered the Cemetery right foot first as I would a Mosque, and offered the following salutation after my Muzawwir :

Peace be upon you O people of Bakieh ! Peace be upon you O ye in the Presence of the Most High ! Receive ye what ye have been promised ! Peace be with ye martyrs of el Bakieh one and all ! We verily, if Allah please, are about to join you. Allah pardon you and us and the Mercy of Allah and his blessing be on you.

We then recited the "Fatihah," the opening chapter of the Koran.

The Fatihah

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.
The Beneficent, the Merciful.
Lord of the Day of Judgment.
Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help.
Guide us in the right path,
The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed
favour,
Not those upon whom wrath is brought down,
Nor those who go astray.¹

—Koran, Sura I.

¹ The Prophet is reported to have said : " Those upon whom wrath is brought down are the Jews, and those who go astray are the Christians ! "

Of course the words are only explanatory and do not limit the significance of the original words used. The

The above salutations are believed to be the very words of Muhammed, who rose in the middle of the night from his couch, although then suffering from the illness which eventually killed him, to visit El Bakieh, and deliver the benediction. After raising his hands in blessing three times, he returned to his house to find his favourite wife, Ayesha, in a state of agitation at his absence. The Prophet informed her that he had gone forth by order of the Archangel Gabriel to bless and intercede for the tenants of El Bakieh.

I was shown the graves of the nine wives of the Prophet, pathetic little mounds once enclosed in white domed buildings which were ruthlessly destroyed a few years ago by the Wahhabi soldiery; the tombs of Fatima and her son Hassan are close by, and many other heroes of Islam of long ago. All the tombs are demolished, only a few stones mark their last resting-place.

As his numerous wives have often been brought up as a reproach against Muhammed, it is only fair to record the fact that Khadijah, his first and only wife for twenty-five years, was considerably his senior. The Prophet made the Arabs realise by the case of the two peoples whom they knew well, how men sometimes desert the right or the middle path bearing to either extreme; the Jews rejecting Jesus Christ, a righteous servant of God, as a liar; while the Christians went to the other extreme and raised that same mortal to the dignity of Godhead.—Translation of the Koran by Muhammed Ali.

senior, which did not detract from their very happy married life. It was only after her death, when he was already over fifty that he married Ayesha the daughter of Abu Bakr, who was his only real wife, so to speak, during his latter years.

The others, with one exception, were the widows of martyrs to the Islamic cause, who were left destitute and the only way of providing for them from his slender resources was for the Prophet to take them under his roof and marry them, though they were none of them in the prime of life, two of them being over sixty years old.

The one exception was Hafsa, daughter of Omar Ibn el Khattab, one of the Prophet's most intimate friends who eventually became the second Khaliph of Islam. This lady lost her husband in battle, and as she was blessed with a very fiery temper, all the Arab gentlemen fought shy of marrying her, and it looked as if she would have to spend the remainder of her life in single blessedness, although still a young woman. This was, according to Arab ideas, a reflection on her family, and Omar, in order to rid himself of the scandal, offered her in marriage to Abu Bakr and on his refusing the honour, to Osman. He also refused to have anything to do with this female firebrand and Omar, feeling he could not swallow these insults, went in an angry rage to lay his complaint before Muhammed, but nothing would induce either Abu Bakr

or Osman to reconsider their decisions. The Prophet, in order to appease the father's feelings and keep the peace between his friends, offered to marry the lady himself, at which there was general rejoicing among the eligible Meccans who feared they might have to take Hafsa to their hearts and homes, while Omar was jubilant at his daughter becoming the wife of his revered Master. By taking these women under his roof Muhammed provided for them in the only way which the circumstances of the age and people made possible.

People sometimes talk as if polygamy were an institution of Islam. It is no more an institution of Islam than it is of Christianity (it was the custom in Christendom for centuries after Christ), but it is an existing human weakness to be reckoned with and in the interests of men and women (women chiefly) to be regulated. Strict monogamy has never really been observed in Western lands, but for the sake of the fetish of monogamy a countless multitude of women and their children have been sacrificed and made to suffer cruelly. Islam destroys all fetishes which always tend to outcast numbers of God's creatures.

In Europe, side by side with woman worship we see the degradation and despair of women. The Islamic system, when completely practised does away with the dangers of seduction, the horrors of prostitution and the hard fate which befalls countless women and children in the West, as the consequence of unavowed polygamy. Its basic principle is that a man is held fully responsible for his behaviour towards every woman and for the

consequences of his behaviour. If it does away likewise with much of the romance which has been woven round the facts of sexual intercourse by Western writers, the romance is an illusion, and we need never mourn the loss of an illusion.¹ . . .

Osman, who afterwards became the third Khaliph, asked the Prophet where, when his time arrived, he should be buried. He was told to shoot an arrow into the air and where it fell would mark his grave. The arrow sped far and Osman lies some two hundred yards from the City walls. Between his grave and the Prophet's Tomb the ground is sacred. Now it is one vast Cemetery and many Moslems from far and near try to reach Medina to die and be buried in this hallowed Cemetery (under the shadow of the Great Mosque), which must be choked with corpses which it could not contain but for the Moslem style of burial; wrapping the bodies in a linen sheet and consigning them to the earth without a coffin, for the Arabs say "Earth is the mother of mankind, while the tree (of which the coffin is made) is only his brother, and that surely it is kinder to return to your mother's arms than to those of your brother."

In the Prophet's day Medina was a small village with gardens and fruit trees and very highly cultivated. Thousands of camels carried her grain and dates to Syria and the less favoured cities of Arabia.

¹ *The Cultural Side of Islam*, by M. Pickthall.

Now much of the country is out of cultivation. The Turks took the cultivators from the land to build the railway, then followed war which destroyed the wells; successive rulers have failed to bring prosperity back. Perhaps now with a strong Government in power and a growing feeling of security Medina will recover her ancient prestige, as the Garden of Arabia, though at present with her railway destroyed, she cannot find a market for her produce and her population, which before the war numbered 70,000, has now dwindled to 15,000, or less.

At the beginning of the present century, when Abdul Hamid planned the linking of his capital with Mecca and Medina, he built a railway which reached from Damascus to Medina, and when the war broke out in 1914 the terminus was still at Medina. During the war the Shereefian army, aided by some British officers, spent their time making the line as unserviceable as possible, and during the peace that ensued the policy adopted by Great Britain and France had the practical effect of perpetuating the derelict condition of the last 500 miles of the Hedjaz Railway between Ma'an and Medina.

The southern section of the railway is for all practical purposes dead; and the great city of Medina, the City of the Prophet, one of the greatest and most productive agricultural centres of all Arabia, which in the short heyday of the Hedjaz Railway grew rapidly to be a city of some 70,000 inhabitants, trafficking with Syria and Palestine and receiving and entertaining the pilgrims from the north, has sunk in a few years, since the

British assisted in the liberation of the Arabs from the domination of the Turks, to the status of a petty borough of some 15,000 souls, whose single dream is still to see the restoration of the railway which once made them so prosperous and who in the meantime sell for a song the goods they produce in such plenty but cannot market.¹

Six hundred years ago a wall was built round the growing city to prevent its being pillaged and make safe the Holy Places ; the wall still surrounds the town pierced with gateways surmounted with round towers. These are very carefully guarded and all who enter and leave are questioned.

Before the walls were built Medina was an open town at the mercy of the invader. After the Hegira, when she gave asylum to Muhammed and his followers as they were exiled from their native town, a virtual state of war existed between Mecca and the City of the Prophet. For years Moslems had suffered persecution with patience but now, when they discovered that the idolaters from Mecca were marching on them with an army a thousand strong and seven hundred camels to capture the town and seize the person of Muhammed they determined to fight to defend themselves. They knew that they were greatly outnumbered, but, nothing daunted, they marched out to meet the enemy and entrenched themselves in a strong posi-

¹ Lecture on Mecca and Medina by J. St. G. Philby.

tion in the Badr Valley, digging a deep ditch in front of their position. That night the Moslem army rested and a fortunate downpour of rain filled the trench with water.

The division of the Army into centre, two wings, a vanguard and a rearguard was already known and put into practice at the time of the Prophet, and Khamis was the term used for describing these five divisions. Every tribe had its standard attached to a lance round which it gathered. In the Battle of Badr the Moslems had three banners. The Muhajir (the emigrants who had fled from Mecca on account of their faith) bore the great Standard of the Prophet, called the Eagle, and reputed to have been of black colour; while the tribes of Aus and Khazraj who had rallied to Muhammed when he arrived a fugitive at Medina had each their own banner.

Islam had instilled into these wild Nomads an absolute unquestioning discipline and contempt of death that made them vastly superior to the enemy.

According to the prevailing custom the Battle of Badr began by single combat. The Meccans invited Muhammed to send three heroes of noble birth to meet them, and the Prophet chose three representatives of his own family; his son-in-law Ali, his uncle Hamza and Ubaida Ibn Harith.

As soon as they advanced the Koreish nobles came

forward to meet them. As the Moslems were in full armour, their faces hidden in helmets, the Meccans called out :

“ Are ye of equal birth with us ? ”

Hamza answered : “ I am the Lion of God and the Prophet.”

To him replied Utba on behalf of the Koreish : “ Thou art nobly born and a worthy foe, and I am the Lion of Halif, but who are the other two ? ”

The Meccan nobles being satisfied with the answer Hamza gave them, the names of the six warriors were called aloud ; they then charged furiously and Mecca lost her three champions. Others came forward to take their place and again were slain, but Ubaida was badly wounded and carried back by Hamza and Ali with a severed leg from which wound he died shortly.

Then Muhammed gave the order to advance and commanded his troops not to unsheath their swords until the enemy were at close quarters. The battle became general ; by noon the sun shone down on a scene of carnage ; by evening it had become a hand-to-hand fight. Many of the Moslems found themselves facing their own fathers and brothers.

When Abu Bakr had accompanied the Prophet in his flight from Mecca, he had left his considerable fortune in the charge of his son Abd er-Rahman, who had refused to accept Islam. When his father

recognised him in the enemy's ranks he called out to know what had become of his possessions and the pagan youth shouted insolently : " There remains only some bows and arrows and a sword to cut off the shame of old age."

Ali fought as if possessed, killing seven idolaters one after the other. Above the din of lances as they struck the shields, the yelling of the warriors, could be heard the Moslem battle-cry " Ahad ! Ahad !" (One God ! One God !).

The Meccans suffered from thirst, and every time they attempted to reach the trench they were shot down by the Moslem archers. Feeling themselves beaten they lost heart and took to flight, dropping their shields and cuirasses, and the Moslems triumphed in this their first battle, undertaken against greatly superior forces numerically. Among the Meccan dead was the Prophet's uncle Abu Jahl, who was perhaps the most important citizen of Mecca.

The victors took a large number of prisoners, who, contrary to the usages and tradition of the Arabs, were treated with the greatest humanity, only two of them being executed ; the booty was allotted in equal shares to the victors after the Prophet had kept a fifth part to be distributed among the poor. The dead were buried immediately ; the Moslems being laid to rest on one side of the hill, while the idolaters were interred in a great pit,

their names being called aloud, while Muhammed sadly uttered the following words :

“ You my kindred You accused me of lying when others believed in me ; you drove me from my home, when others received me ; what destiny has been yours ? Alas—all that God threatened is fulfilled.”

Zaid, the Prophet's freed slave and adopted son, carried the tidings of the victory to Medina, and the women, young and old, came out to meet the victors, playing their timbals and singing. The Battle of Badr was the first of a series of triumphs for the Moslem people that were eventually to change the face of the world. At the same time it is a fact to be recorded that in the Prophet's lifetime and that of his immediate successors the wars of Islam were all waged in self-defence and with ruth and consideration for the enemy such as was never known before.

While all the world is discussing the vexed question of war and disarmament, it is perhaps well to give here the attitude of Islam on the subject.

While Islam bans all aggressive wars, it permits such as are undertaken in defence of the life, property, and religious liberty of all denominations. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who said, when you are smitten on the right cheek turn your left cheek also, had to admit that it is essential to draw the sword in self-defence. “ Think not I am come to send

peace on earth : I am come not to send peace, but a sword.”—*Matt.* x. 34. “Then said he (Jesus) unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip : and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.”—*Luke* xxii. 36.

• Now to quote the Koran on the subject :

Fight in the name of God against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities ; verily God loveth not aggression.—*Koran*, II, 190.

Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged ; and God is indeed able to give them victory, those who have been driven from their homes unjustly only because they said “Our Lord is God.” . . . For had it not been for God’s repelling some men by means of others, cloisters, churches, synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of God is oft mentioned, would assuredly have been pulled down.”—*Koran*, XXII, 39-40.

This clearly shows the only condition under which war is sanctioned by Islam. Warfare is only one, and that the least form of “Jihad,” which means effort or endeavour. The Prophet said, “The greatest Jihad is against a man’s own lust,” and the term is also applied to the effort of the student to acquire knowledge. Jihad is a general effort after good and is charged on all Moslems as a sacred duty.

March 19th.

This afternoon having received permission to use my car we start for the Jebel Ohod, a few miles outside the walls. There is a legend that this chain of mountains is the chosen spot for the final Day of Resurrection when men, genii and animals will all appear for judgment.

The Arab firmly believes in the existence of these Jinn, who are an intermediate order of creatures who eat and drink, live and die, and in many ways resemble mankind. There are good and evil genii, and they occasionally make themselves visible under the guise of animals, more especially snakes. When traversing dim alleys or graveyards at night an Arab will recite a verse from the Koran to protect himself from the evil one.

To reach these hills we motor through a sandy waste that shows signs of a past cultivation and we pass deserted wells, groves of palms and scattered remains of villages still inhabited by a remnant of their former population. The car winds its way with difficulty through the narrow dilapidated streets and once we came face to face with a camel who turned tail and fled precipitately from the evil-smelling monster. Children rushed out of broken doorways to stare, and it was comforting among so much squalor and poverty, to see their eyes free from any taint of eye disease; one rarely meets a blind person, and the inhabitants of Arabia evidently are

not cursed with ophthalmia, like their brethren in Egypt.

Leaving the villages behind we arrive where the hills start encroaching on the plain and, alighting at the tombs of the warriors who fought the Battle of Ohod, we stand to offer salutations to their memory, though the shrines have been destroyed and even the grave of their general obliterated.

At the foot of these hills a battle took place in the days of Muhammed between his small band of followers, numbering seven hundred, and three thousand unbelievers who came from Mecca to attack. The Meccans, confident of their numerical superiority and wishing to avenge their defeat at Badr, marched into the plain with their idols in the centre of their army ; and their women, who accompanied them, chanting their war songs, of which the following is a specimen :

We are the daughters of the Star of the Morn.

We tread softly on silken cushions—

Face the enemy boldly and we press you in our arms ;
Fly and we shun you, shun you with disgust.

The first violent onslaught of the idolaters was repulsed by the Moslems, but later their numbers overbore the defenders and a desperate fight ensued. Muhammed had placed his few archers on a hill behind his troops to protect their flanks and rear and gave them strict orders on no account to

abandon their position. Again the idolaters tried to rush the small army, but again failed to break them, and the Moslem general Hamza, uncle of the Prophet, seized the opportunity to dash in on the Meccans as they retired in confusion and deal havoc among their ranks.

Victory then seemed assured for the Moslems, when the archers, greedy for plunder and forgetting their injunctions, abandoned their position and dispersed to share in the booty.

A chief of the Koreish, Khalid ben Walid, at once saw his chance and with his two hundred horsemen fell on the rear of the Moslem army; the Meccan infantry and camel corps also turned in their flight and the Prophet's troops taken in front and rear had to renew the battle at a frightful disadvantage. Hamza was killed, Abu Bakr and Omar wounded, and many other leaders slain.

Muhammed, who with Abu Bakr and Omar had at first watched the fight from a cave high up in the rocks, entered the arena when his troops were pressed and fought till he was severely wounded in the face. Luckily the Meccans were too exhausted to follow up their advantage, and they retreated from the Medinite territories after mutilating the Moslem bodies in a horrible fashion, while the women who accompanied them tore the ears and noses from the dead to make themselves necklaces.

Naturally these barbarities of the Koreish created among the Moslems a feeling of bitter resentment, and even the Prophet was so moved by indignation as to say that the pagan dead in the future would be treated likewise; but his innate gentleness in time conquered his exasperation, and from that day the horrible practice of mutilation which prevailed not only in Arabia, but in all the ancient countries, was strictly forbidden to the Moslems.

On his return to Medina, Muhammed directed a small troop of his disciples on camels to pursue the retreating enemy and harass them in order to impress on them that the Moslems, though worsted in the battle, were still undaunted in spirit, and the Meccan general on discovering his troops being pursued, feared enemy reinforcements and hurried back to Mecca, murdering any Medinites he met on the route.

Hamza was buried where he died, and seventy Moslems who fell in battle lie in one great grave close to their intrepid general.

I was shown where the rival armies were posted and the battle was fought with arrows, spears and stones. We climbed the rock to the cave from which Muhammed, Abu Bakr and Omar watched the conflict. It was a very stiff climb to the cave, and I was terribly hampered in my Arab dress and forced to put my veil up. I eventually discarded the voluminous black skirt and cape and emerged

in my thin summer frock, as if I was walking in an English country lane and hatless but protected from the sun by my umbrella. I think the Arabs were startled at the way I then tackled that steep ascent! My Muzawwir looked shocked at my appearance, which was certainly very unconventional for a lady in Arabia, and being responsible for my behaviour while I am in his charge he tried to remonstrate, but I gently pointed out to him that he had also broken the law as he had offered special supplications at the tomb of Hamza and the dead warriors.

The Wahhabis when besieging Medina, destroyed these tombs as they did those of Bakieh, considering them a danger to Islam, when they became an object of worship to ignorant pilgrims; only a few stones mark the spot where the soldiers lie and Hamza is left with a mound.

From the cave we had a glorious view of Medina beneath; that lovely walled City of Minarets surrounded by gardens and palm groves and mountains stretching into the blue distance; the mountains which according to local tradition will be the scene of the great Day of Resurrection. Then all creation will be assembled awaiting judgment; for Islam does not arrogate immortality to man alone, but teaches that all living things will partake of a future state; surely a comfort to those of us who mourn a dumb friend.

And there is not an animal in the earth, nor flying creature upon wings but is a people like unto yourselves. We have neglected nothing in the Book of Our Decrees. Then unto the Lord will they be gathered.—*Koran*.

And the Prophet himself said :

. “Fear God in regard to animals ! ride them when they are fit to be ridden and get off when they are tired. Verily there are rewards for doing good to dumb animals and giving them water to drink.”

And again :

“An hour’s contemplation and study of God’s Creation is better than a year of adoration.”

And the Holy *Koran* says :

Praise be to Him who created all the wedded pairs of that which the earth groweth and of their own kind and of kinds which they know not.

The most recent of all scientific discoveries is that everything exists in pairs as male and female, even the rock crystals, even electricity.

MEDINA

·II

MEDINA

March 20th.

WE motor this morning a few miles into the desert to visit the Mosque Al Kiblatain, so called because it has two Kiblas, of which that one facing Jerusalem in the North was the original niche. One day while the Prophet was leading the prayers, the Angel Gabriel appeared and ordered him to face round to Mecca, and thus break away from the Jews who were trying to undermine Islam. So the congregation all turned South, and now the Mosque has two Kiblas. It is no longer in use as a Mosque, but as it was the time for midday prayer, we did our Rekaats there, led by an Indian Sheikh, Munshi Karamat, who has joined us, and who can speak a little English, besides being a very charming gentleman.

We returned to the house, which is my temporary home, for lunch, and arranged that we should meet again at nine o'clock (Arab time) to visit another Mosque and some gardens.

Khadijeh, my hostess who always comes to sit with me and share my meals, is still a young woman

and would be very pretty if she did not look so ill. She tells me she has been in pain for many months, and I fear it is consumption. She has been married over ten years, but there are no children—a great grief to both of them.

I enjoy the Arab dishes and am already accustomed to their ways. Where no chairs exist, one naturally sits on the floor. I am beginning to feel at home in my Arab dress but have not discarded my stockings and I know my feet are an object of curiosity at the Mosque.

This afternoon I again motor into the country accompanied by the two sheikhs, Sid Ahmed es Said and Munshi Karamat, also Mustapha, who is my shadow and arranges everything with perfect forethought. We drive past the City walls to the South and through innumerable palm groves to visit the first Mosque of Islam, Jama Kouba.

When the Prophet fled from Mecca it was on this very spot, some miles before Medina, that his camel came to halt and he descended to pray, whereupon the Angel Gabriel appeared and commanded him to build a Mosque there.

In the meantime the news had reached the Moslems in Medina that the Prophet had left Mecca and was on his way to them. Day after day they had left the City to welcome him and were becoming anxious for his safety, when one evening a Jew looking from the top of his castle spied the two

fugitives and shouted derisively to the Moslems below, "Rejoice, your good fortune has come to you ; the men you are waiting for are approaching." The whole place resounded with the cry "Allahu Akbar." Thus it came about that the little village of Kouba had the distinction of being the first to welcome Muhammed. It was here on that hot June day in A.D. 662 that he alighted from his camel, and it was here he rested for fourteen days and was meanwhile joined by his cousin Ali from Mecca.

When the fortnight was up he proceeded to Medina, where men, women and children lined the streets and crowded the housetops, welcoming him and singing :—

"Lo a radiant moon has ascended,
 From the shades of the valley below !
 To thy laws may our will be bended
 O Prophet ! Thy mind may we know.
 All praise till our journey be ended
 To Him who all good doth bestow."

The struggle for the honour of being the Prophet's host was great, and at last Muhammed himself decided the question by suggesting that his camel be left alone and that he would accept the hospitality of him at whose door the camel stopped. It was in front of the house of Abu Ayoub el Ansari that the camel came to a standstill and the Prophet remained there for seven months, while his own small house and its Mosque were being built.

The Mosque at Kouba was the first to be erected. It was enlarged and beautified by the Sultan Abdul Majid, but the walls are over six hundred years old and some of it dates back 1,351 years, to the Hegira, or flight from Mecca. It is of very fine proportions; the white walls of the interior lend themselves to some lovely colouring of greens and blues. Within the court is a small kiosk, open on all sides, which marks the place where the camel knelt and the people of Medina say that a prayer in this Mosque is counted as an omrah or lesser pilgrimage, also one may pray privately for anything one wants. After we have performed the prayer of two prostrations I sit and watch Mustapha supplicating and wonder what he is demanding so eagerly. There are only one or two worshippers beside ourselves and the silence and peace within those ancient walls are very soothing.

On leaving this lovely little Mosque we visit a well not far from the entrance, surrounded by Athal¹ and palm trees, in which lies the Prophet's ring which was worn by Abu Bekr, Omar and Osman, as they in turn succeeded to the Khaliphate. But alas! on an evil day the ring fell from Osman's finger and sank in the deep waters. Since then the ignorant people connect this event with the

¹ The athal tree belongs to the tamarisk family and grows to a height of 30 ft., often with a girth of 8-10 ft.

disasters that have overtaken Islam. Though efforts have been made to drain the well, the ring has never been recovered.

We afterwards drive to a garden belonging to the son of the late Emir of Medina. Our road led us through a winding gorge till we entered a wilderness of lanes between high sun-baked mud walls in a seeming forest of palms and flowering trees, and the breeze which kissed our faces was laden with fragrance. The car found some difficulty in negotiating the corners of the narrow lanes and occasionally, when meeting a tiller of the soil, he had to flatten himself against the wall to give us passage. At length we stopped at a rough wooden gate, the entrance to our destined Eden, where we were welcomed by the overseer, as the owner of the garden was in Mecca.

It was a joy to feast one's eyes on the green luxuriance and see roses, jasmine and other flowers twining themselves among the fig and orange trees. The scarlet pomegranate was in profusion, and under the date-palms, corn and burseem grew thick, ripe, and some was already cut. The balmy air and scented breeze that wandered through the garden was like a breath of Paradise after the scorching aridity of the desert. The song of the small birds and splashing of the water, even the creak of the Sakkiah, the water wheel of the East, was music to the ear.

A pergola of grapes stretched itself over a tank of water. I was given a nosegay of sweet-scented roses. The aristocrats of Medina all possess gardens, often covering a hundred acres, and they retire to them when the City grows hot and stuffy. There are no houses in these gardens, only pavilions of earthen bricks, opening in front on to a tank of running water in which they bathe. These tanks are so clear that we can easily see the bottom, about 8 to 10 ft. deep. The pavilions are very simple, with pillars of palm trunks supporting the opening and a few carpets and divans arranged about, where they sleep and eat during the summer months. Behind the pavilions are buildings to house the gardeners and always one hears the creak of the Sakkiah, as the wheel turned by camels, mules or oxen lifts the water to the surface to spread itself in little channels over the garden.

Time passes quickly in such happy and beautiful surroundings; indeed, we had spent so long in the garden that it was too late to get back to the City for the sunset prayer. Mustapha and the two sheikhs spread their Abbas on the ground among the orange trees, while I carried my carpet away to a secluded spot in an adjacent palm grove, thinking that they might prefer to pray alone; but they followed me to my sanctuary exclaiming that I had found a worthier site. We then took our places behind Munshi Karamat and turning to Mecca we

prostrated ourselves, while a nightingale sang a pæan of praise.

March 21st.

On the following morning I received a message asking me to visit the new hotel, built to house the pilgrims. A pleasing feature in this country is the increased care taken for the safety and well-being of these poor people, who in the past suffered from every danger that can beset the path of a wayfarer in the desert. Robbery and violence were rife: death from hunger, and more especially thirst lay in wait. Now there are stations with wells, rest houses and dispensaries, where all medical aid is given free at regular intervals on the pilgrim routes; and hotels are being built for their accommodation, not only in the Holy Cities, but at the ports of Jeddah and Yanbo, where they land; at Messajeed and at Mûna on the way to the final pilgrimage at Arafaat: a general committee has been appointed by the Government to see that these are kept clean and in good repair and to fix the number of persons for each room and special accommodation is available for the women.

For the richer pilgrims there are always houses at their disposal to rent, to accommodate themselves and the large suite that generally accompanies a great man.

The hotel I am invited to inspect is for the

gentleman who does not require the luxury and trouble of a house, but wants comfort and privacy for himself and his family. It is to be called the "Grand Hotel" or its equivalent in Arabic, and the Manager wishes to hear from me how it compares with the hotels of London and Paris.

I entered an open courtyard from which rose three tiers of galleries leading into numerous bedrooms. The courtyard formed a kind of entrance hall with many "Kursis"¹ about on which the guests can squat and drink tea or coffee, and play chess, a very favourite game in the Near and Middle East. An inner court provided a dining-room. A wide stone staircase ascended to the bedrooms, which each contained an iron four-poster with a mattress, pillow and sheet, also a mosquito net, and a table with a looking-glass, brush and comb, while on the ground stood large ewers, which being porous kept the water cool. A splash of vivid colour beside the door were the soft slippers awaiting the pilgrim feet. What more can man desire? The four-posters were the only bedsteads in Medina.

I congratulated the Manager on it all, especially on his forethought in providing a brush and comb, which he replied was most important for the pilgrims' beards. No doubt equally important were the slippers for the tired feet. The hotel will open in a few days.

¹ Low chairs.

Later on in the afternoon, after the siesta, I started out to return the visit of the Lady Fatima and her family, accompanied by Mustapha, as it would not have been considered correct for me to walk alone in public any more than our grandmothers could have done so in the days of Queen Victoria.

The house I entered was most quaint and attractive ; it was built of thick mud walls, the side facing the street was whitewashed and had no windows, save one small grille, and it felt delightfully cool on coming in from the hot street. A covered passage led at right angles into the inner apartment so that when the door opened no curious glance could reach the living-rooms. The passage opened into an oblong courtyard surrounded with colonnades and on the South side an open hall faced the North and was strewn with carpets and divans. On the right and left of this were the doors of the reception rooms which are used during the winter season, while in summer the open hall serves as a permanent sitting-room, and it was here that my host received me. The floor of the courtyard was paved in a beautiful Arabesque design in marbles of different colours. Some orange trees in large tubs stood about and various tropical creepers climbed the colonnade, covering it in with deep green foliage and brilliant blooms.

My host, leaving Mustapha drinking coffee in

the reception room, led me up a steep narrow staircase with painted banisters, to the flat roof of the chambers that encircled the courtyard. Here were the ladies' quarters, and very charming they were, with the roof garden massed with roses and pink oleanders growing in great pots of glazed green pottery. Here Fatima welcomed me, and her husband returned below to entertain Mustapha and a few male guests who had assembled, while I made acquaintance with the ladies who had been invited to meet me.

They were a gay crowd and we laughed and chatted over small incidents that amused us at the moment; indeed, the surroundings were so full of charm that I was prepared to laugh at any and everything that came my way, for sheer gaiety of spirit.

To my astonishment I discovered one little Turkish lady who spoke French fluently. She told me that her father had been attached to the Turkish Embassy in Paris before the War. She had married an officer in the Ottoman Army, who lost his life when the railway bridge near Maan on the Hedjaz Railway was blown up in 1917, and she was now married to a gentleman of Medina. I asked her if she ever thought with regret of the gay life of her youth in Paris and other continental cities where her father had been posted during his career, but she assured me that she was perfectly content,

and could not be happier than in her present home with her husband and three children, while she goes occasionally, when funds permit, to visit her family on the Bosphorus. After drinking tea and eating quantities of delicious little cakes made of honey and almonds mixed with a small amount of flour, I quite reluctantly took leave of them, as the time for the sunset prayer drew near.

My sojourn in Medina is all too short; there is so much to see in this historic land, and it is unlikely that I shall meet these attractive ladies again before my departure—"Inshallah," I shall return one day to the Beloved City, the City of the Prophet.

My hostess joins me for the evening meal, looking very pretty, but pale and fragile, dressed entirely in pale blue. The scarf flung round her head is beautifully embroidered with tiny garlands of flowers, which she proudly exhibits as the work of her own hands, and she has every reason to be pleased with the charming result, which it would require a Greuze to depict with justice. She is indeed the embodiment of grace as she reclines on the divan, with one small foot tucked under her slight figure, while like all her nation she makes use of her slim hands to emphasise her words.

We sit beside the tray piled up with meat, rice and highly-spiced salads and vegetables. The meat is cooked in an earthenware jar, with a handful of herbage to close the mouth, and added to it

are some peppercorns, cinnamon, and nutmeg, pounded with liquid butter, or "ghee" and by some cunning known to these people, the meat, though eaten the day it is killed, is always tender. While partaking of the really dainty feast, I tell Khadejah of the day's doings, and beg her to come with me on the morrow to visit the gardens, but she declines to leave the house. I feel very sorry for her, as she is evidently suffering from homesickness in addition to other troubles, and she tells me she longs to go to her father, who lives in Damascus.

Not very long ago, before the railway connecting Medina to Damascus was destroyed, during the Great War, Khadejah could have entered the train, and been conveyed to her old home in four or five days, but now she would have to make the desert journey to Jeddah and from there by sea to Beyrout, a long and tiring voyage involving several changes, and one which she is quite unfit to undertake.

We had finished our meal, had washed and dried our hands, and the slaves had removed the tray, when we were told that my two friendly sheikhs were below asking to be received. Khadejah promptly left me as it was not etiquette for her to remain, even if veiled, and I sometimes wondered if these ladies ever felt a pang of envy at the freedom I was allowed.

My guests enter, followed by Mustapha. After the usual greetings and salutations, Sid Ahmed

presents me with a lovely picture of part of the great Mosque, carved in wood and coloured like the original, showing the Prophet's Tomb and the minaret dedicated to Bilal, whose beautiful voice called the faithful to prayer in the days of Muhammed. Munshi Karamat gives me a scented spoon of sandal-wood and a large coloured map of the Mosque, giving its history and every detail.

The variety of sandal-wood grown in this country is called "aud," and till a short time ago the wood was used as fuel for their charcoal burners. The Arabs love perfume, and when they discovered its aromatic qualities they started using it for making doors, window-frames and the interior decorations of their houses generally. It is sometimes sold as frankincense for European churches, though the true frankincense grows in Southern Arabia.

We drink tea and again discuss the destruction of the Tombs which is evidently a sore subject and there is a feeling of resentment always against the "Ikhwan," but when the King is mentioned there is expressed nothing but admiration and gratitude for the security and order he had given the country. One sheikh even went so far as to say that he considered Ibn Sa'ud to be the greatest ruler Islam has seen since the days of the first four Khaliphs. That is indeed praise!

We also debate on questions of morality and points connected with religion. They well know

the charges of intolerance often levelled at Islam by Western writers. Yet did the Crusaders show tolerance when they entered Jerusalem, and boasted in their official report to the Pope that their horses waded knee deep in human blood. Perhaps Christianity has occasionally failed in showing tolerance if history is to be believed.

From the moment the Church obtained civil power under Constantine the general principle of coercion was admitted and acted on, both against the Jews, heretics and pagans. They were tortured with every refinement of cruelty, they were burnt at a slow consuming fire to enable them to think of the charity and humanity of the Church of Christ.¹

In the fifteenth century the Pope granted a special charter to the Portuguese and Spaniards to treat heretics in any way they chose in order to bring them into the fold, and history once again relates how they construed the permission. The Spanish Inquisition, Cromwell's treatment of the Irish, the Russian pogroms, the extermination of the Incas and many another massacre in cold blood testify to the intolerance occasionally shown by the Church, whether Catholic, Protestant or Greek. It was not until the Western nations broke away from their religious law that they became more tolerant, while it was when the Moslems grew less

¹ Lecky. Compare Hallam, *History of England*, Vol. I, Chap. 3.

observant of their law that they declined in tolerance. Islam alone has preached tolerance as an essential part of her faith.

“Let there be no compulsion in religion.”—*Koran*, II, 257.

Muhammed not only preached tolerance, but offered to all the conquered nations liberty of worship. A nominal tribute was the only compensation they were required to pay for their exemption from military service, which was compulsory on the Moslems, and from all taxes paid by the latter; and that tribute gave them absolute freedom to observe and enjoy their religion, while the discordant clanging of a church bell was the only thing ever prohibited.

Having discoursed on the subject of tolerance, we pass on to discuss the crisis the world is now facing, and the emancipation of women. The sheikhs show some amusement, tempered with admiration at the methods adopted by the Western woman to win herself a place in the sun; their sympathy is all on the side of the ladies. Though I occasionally caught a twinkle in the eye of Sid Ahmed, and both sheikhs often smiled, I never heard them give way to loud laughter, and it is seldom that an Arab is guilty of noisy mirth.

After a little more conversation they rise to leave, apologising for having kept me up. I gladly go to bed after my long day. To-morrow I am to be

received by the Emir of Medina, whom I wish to thank for his courtesy in allowing me to use my car within the City and his forethought in providing for my admission on the night of my arrival. He has fixed the audience for 1.30 to-morrow (7.30 a.m.). After the Dawn Prayer the Arabs start their day's work, taking their sleep during the hot middle hours.

March 22nd.

I paid my respects to the Emir this morning shortly after sunrise, arriving in my car accompanied by Mustapha. We are received by officials and shown into a large hall opening to the sky in the centre, and raised on one side by a high step. There are divans below this dais, on which were seated several picturesque figures awaiting audience. The Emir entered a moment later and led me to the raised platform which also had divans on three sides and where I sat cross-legged on his right hand. He is a tall man, thin, old and very dignified; wearing a black and gold Abba over his white robe and a red and white checked Kaffeyah of transparent material bound by the Aghal. After I had thanked him for all he had done to make my visit to Medina easy, he replied how pleased he was to welcome me to the Holy City and hoped that my pilgrimage would strengthen my faith in Islam. He then asked me if I knew Mr. Philby (Hadj Abdulla

Philby) and what position he held in England, and I felt the cold breath of suspicion was on us both, which does not surprise me when one thinks of the name of Burton, Burchardt and others who penetrated into the Haram disguised as Moslems and what remains to Islam but to protect what is most sacred to her faith.

An attendant brought round glasses of hot sweet milk which I managed to drink under my veil ; then followed black unsweetened coffee and cakes, and shortly after, I bade farewell to my host, as the Audience Hall was filling up with Ministers and others desiring interviews ; it looked as if his morning would be a busy one.

While driving through the streets I watch the life of this City as it passes before me ; it is so very peaceful ; no trams or buses, no rush or hurry disturbs its gentle quiet. The camels pad silently, bearing their burden of human life or merchandise, and little wooden carriages roofed in and painted in bright colours of greens and blues, mounted on two high wheels, are drawn by a horse or more often a large white mule, whose ears, mane and tail are stained red with henna.

I linger in the market place with its booths piled high with golden fruit and gaudy wares displayed to tempt the pilgrim heart, where the grocer is a turbaned Arab in flowing draperies, the butcher a picturesque figure from an Arabian Night's dream.

The little shops displaying their wares with the proprietor squatting inside are centres of gossip, where his friends come to pass the time of day and perhaps smoke a pipe of peace, the forbidden narghileh. Through an old carved stone archway is a dim alley; this is the scent bazaar, where the essence of every flower of the East is caught and imprisoned in slender glass bottles. Here among the perfumes he loves, sits an Arab cross-legged reading the Koran, gently swaying to the rhythm of the beautiful verses as he intones them in a low melodious voice. Turbaned sheikhs, veiled women, children dressed in all the colours of the rainbow pass by; no beggars spoil the picture and the cry for "backsheesh" is unknown.

Again I spend my afternoon in a garden accompanied by my faithful sheikhs, and I look with longing at the young dates yet unripe that hang in clusters on the palm trees. This garden is renowned for its fruit and grows twenty-eight different species of dates, which are world famous, besides grapes and pomegranates.

The date-palms well deserve the praise accorded them. The lower branches are not mutilated as they are in Egypt and the bright yellow stems that bear the clusters of fruit must have been as thick as a man's forearm. The Anbari and the Azwah, perhaps the most prized of the date family, are never allowed to be sold outside the environs of

Medina, but many others including the Shilahi, the Halwah and El Birni were in the old prosperous days to be seen in the markets of the Islamic world. The fruit ripens about the middle of May, and the gathering of it marks an important festival in Arab life, only to be compared to our own harvest celebrations.

The oranges and lemons are mostly over, a few still brighten the shining green foliage; a lizard flashes across our path like a living emerald; a bulbul, the Arabian nightingale, is pouring forth his song of happiness.

The owner of this paradise is absent, but his young sons entertain us to tea in the pavilion and do the honours with a shy grace and no trace of self-consciousness. They are attending a school at Medina, where they learn the usual curriculum of a schoolboy; but first and foremost they are taught the Koran and well grounded in Islamic Law and tradition. So far, no foreign language has been included in their educational system. They are now enjoying a holiday, for all schools are closed during the time of pilgrimage. I am told they will shortly commence studying English, which is the only foreign language taught in the schools.

Following the Prophet's commands the Arabs have always set great store on knowledge; and in their days of conquest, they founded schools of medicine, astronomy and history in the chief cities

of Asia, Africa and Spain. Baghdad became the home of philosophers, poets and men of letters, while Europe is indebted to Islam for the preservation of much of the classical literature of the ancient world.

The Prophet said :—

“Acquire knowledge, it enableth the possessor to distinguish right from wrong, it lighteth up the path to Heaven. It is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendless. It guideth to happiness, it sustaineth in adversity. It is an ornament among friends and an armour against enemies.”

The world owes much to the Arabs for their discoveries in fertilisers, the grafting of fruit, the tanning of leather, for their skill in the use of medicine, when Europe was relying on the witch doctor or the laying on of the hands by the clergy. They calculated the size and shape of the earth from the measurements of a degree on the shore of the Red Sea ; this at a time when Europe was asserting the flatness of our globe. They invented the telescope, which they described as “a tube to the extremities of which were attached diopters,” which were improved upon and used with marked success in the Observatories of Cairo and Maragha, and which “Friar Bacon” brought to a more finished perfection some centuries later.

The Arabs invented the mariner’s compass and voyaged over half the world in quest of knowledge and

the pursuit of commerce. They discovered the Azores, To Spain they gave a vast system of irrigation by flood-gates, wheels and pumps ; and tracts of land that now lie waste were once richly cultivated. The women were not behind in culture and education, but were as keen in their search as were their husbands and brothers. They took degrees in medicine and jurisprudence and participated in the glories of a splendid civilisation. They had their own libraries and colleges in which to study, and several well-known ladies spent their substance in establishing hospitals for the sick, refuges for the homeless and orphans and endowing universities for their less favoured sisters in Cairo and Damascus.

It was by the Koran and the faith implanted in their hearts that the Arabs conquered a world greater than did Alexander the Great, greater than that of Rome and in as many tens of years as the latter had wanted hundreds to accomplish her conquest. It was by the light of Islam that they alone of all the Shemites came to Europe as kings, whither the Phœnicians had come as traders and the Jews as fugitives. They came to Europe to hold up the light to humanity, to raise up the wisdom and knowledge of Helas from the dead, to teach philosophy, medicine, astronomy and the golden art of song to the West as to the East, to stand at the cradle of modern science and to cause us late epigoni for ever to weep over the day when Granada fell.¹

Before the days of Muhammed, Arabia was steeped in idolatry ; female babies were buried alive as unwanted, and other hideous atrocities were

¹ Deutsch.

committed. Truly can it be said of the Arabian Prophet that he accomplished nothing short of a miracle in raising the country from its slough of crime and ignorance to a united nation with a deep sense of its religious obligations and duties, a nation which was shortly after his death to conquer and lead the world in culture, knowledge and scientific attainments, while the faith of Islam spread from sea to sea.

It was when the Arabs allowed luxury and love of pleasure to creep in on them and rob them of their ideals that they fell from their high estate. Petty jealousies divided them, the accumulation of wealth absorbed them and forgetting the teaching of their Prophet they allowed dissension to weaken them till they lost all in Europe that they had so hardly won and held so long. Few people realise in the present day that the Arabs for over seven hundred years reigned gloriously in Spain.

At the end, their rulers, the Ommeyade Khaliphs had greatly deteriorated and were no longer the single-minded men animated by the spirit of Islam that had won renown in two continents. They were seeking their own aggrandisement and the people distrusted them with reason.

It was largely owing to the old jealousies of the desert, to the dividing of the spoils, that they lost the Battle of Tour when victory was within their grasp and were eventually driven out of Spain after

suffering the most atrocious tortures at the hands of their conquerors, who consigned to the flames the literary and scientific treasures amassed by the Khaliphs through the centuries and ruthlessly butchered or burnt at the stake the Moslem men, women and children, while the few who escaped death were sold as slaves, or fled to Africa beggared of everything.

The fair land of Spain which the Moors had transformed into a garden was soon converted into a desert by the ignorant Spaniards and the vast system of irrigation so carefully planned to fertilise the country was allowed to crumble and perish.

Meanwhile the Abbaside Khaliphs reigned over the greater part of Western Asia, making Baghdad their headquarters; a city in those days unrivalled for its magnificence and beauty. . Situated on both banks of the Tigris, with its hanging gardens, its splendid Mosques and palaces, its world-famed library, it enjoyed a brilliant prosperity such as the world had never known before or since. This lasted for about a hundred years, during the reigns of the mighty Mansur, Haroun el Rashid, known to the Western world as the hero of the tales of the "Thousand and One Nights," Mamun and Wathiq; this period was named the Golden Age and was an era of material splendour and intellectual brilliance. Haroun besides his many other accom-

plishments, was a very fine horseman and excelled at Polo, a game that originated in Persia, his gifted son Mamun devoted his leisure to the study of mathematics and astronomy, and the nobles and moneyed classes took pleasure in horse racing, fencing and wrestling matches, and they hunted the lion with leopards kept specially for the purpose; while indoors, chess, cards and dice were the popular games.

A large army was maintained and every able-bodied man was liable for service and besides the army there was also a navy recruited mostly from the seafaring men of Basra and Bahrein and which was responsible for many notable victories, including the conquest of Cyprus from the Romans. The amir in command of the Fleet was named Amir el Ma (General of the Sea), from which is derived our English title of Admiral.

The expenditure of the Empire was colossal and the revenue was mostly derived from the land tax and the dues on factories, salt and imports, also for a short time there existed a luxury tax. But the enervating influences of Persia and Byzantium were invading the country and the rulers that followed these illustrious Khaliphs were mostly feeble pleasure-loving despots who forsook the stern virtues of the desert for the effete luxury of Rome. The Arabs to whom the trend of events was distasteful, and to whose mentality the pomp

and extravagance surrounding the throne was hateful, began retiring in ever-increasing numbers to the simple healthy life of their deserts or their quiet interests in Mecca and Medina, leaving behind a population of many nationalities, but mostly composed of Persians and Syrians which became ever more sensuous and unwarlike in those days of ease. Notwithstanding the prohibition of Islam, the Court indulged in wine and summoned singers from Greece and Constantinople, the then centres of music and song, with the result that the evenings degenerated into downright drinking bouts and carouses.

Then came the hordes of Khenghis Khan sweeping their eastern borders, while the greater part of the Arab army were engaged in defending their western boundaries against the Crusaders. Nothing could stop the rush of the invaders. The Moslem universities were sacked, the scholars and professors perished in the general massacre and much valuable literature was consigned to the flames. The accumulated treasure of five centuries was lost for all time to the human race, and the vast irrigation system of that once fertile land was blotted out for ever.

For forty days the streets of Baghdad ran red with blood; its splendid Mosques and palaces were utterly destroyed, and the Khaliph and his family murdered under circumstances of great brutality.

Thus miserably ended the Abbaside Dynasty and the Mogul conquerors ruled in Iraq.¹

But in less than a generation an insurrection in Persia recalled the invaders, and the Arabs with their inherent vitality recovered from the blow and started to work to rebuild their city and restore their land. It was then that the Osmanli Turks came on the scene and seized the Khaliphate from the grasp of the enfeebled Arabs and the foundations of the Ottoman Empire were laid.

For many centuries the Turkish Empire flourished and true to the teachings of Islam it encouraged the pursuit of knowledge; universities were inaugurated at Adrianople and Brusa, and at Stambul, which eventually became the capital, there arose Mosques and palaces that were gems of architectural grace.

The Sultans, themselves often poets of distinction, encouraged men of learning and the remnant of the Islamic philosophers and seers took refuge in the Ottoman Empire. But the unwieldy dimensions of this Empire, containing so many races and religions, proved too intricate a problem for the Turks. Slowly and insidiously decline set in on them while they seemed unconscious of the deterioration taking place. Though brave soldiers,

¹ The cruel irony was that these savage Tartars shortly after this wanton destruction embraced Islam and became ardent patrons of learning and the fine arts.

their military system and equipment were so antiquated that they could not hold their own in the battlefield against the combined attacks of their numerous foes. Being ardent patriots they tried to recover the ground they had lost, and when thought to be down and out astonished the European powers by smashing up the Greek Army and expelling them from Asia Minor. In spite of their fearful ordeals they are now facing their future with courage and a constructive policy which should win them sympathy. It is up to the Moslem peoples to follow the precepts of their Prophet, to dispel the cloud of ignorance under which many of them live ; to seek knowledge for " the ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr," ¹ and thus Islam may help heal the wounds of humanity.

As this is our last day in this lovely land, we cannot linger in this garden. There is much still to arrange for our departure, so we bid farewell to our youthful hosts and hasten back to the City ; to-morrow afternoon we leave for Jeddah.

March 23rd.

Early this morning my Muzawwir conducted me to the Mosque of the Prophet for the final prayers and salutations in the Raoudah and at the tombs before leaving Medina. In the flush of the sunrise I again look on the glorious green copper dome of

¹ Saying 'of Muhammed.

the Prophet's Tomb, vividly painted against the luminous blue of the Arabian sky. The shock of colour thrills me with a feeling of intense artistic appreciation, while the graceful minaret of Bilal adds to the charm of the picture.

Afterwards I return to have a chat with my hostess and thank her for all the kindness and consideration shown me.

As it is Friday I am to attend the midday service in the Mosque, leaving for Jeddah afterwards, which will mean sleeping on the road and carrying food and water.

On hearing the Azzan, I betake myself to the Mosque accompanied by Mustapha carrying my prayer carpet, which I have borrowed for the occasion from my hostess. Outside the gate called Bab-el-Majidi in honour of the Sultan who spent so lavishly on this City, I saw the picturesque body-guard of the Emir keeping the way clear for his arrival. I entered the women's quarter, where Mustapha spread my carpet and left me. It was crowded with women of all classes; two eunuchs were there to look after them and keep order. Though the women pray in the Raoudah and give salutations at the tombs there is a large space in the outer court specially reserved for them on Fridays (the Moslem Sunday), where they congregate at midday, and after the service they sit and chat among themselves, forming little coteries for

gossip and the children who squat like small frozen images during the prayers now run about playing. I am told that in the olden days there were always fifty eunuchs attached to the Mosque; it was the Sultan Salah-ed-din, the Saladin of Crusader fame, who first instituted their employment in Mosques, but now when they die their places are no longer filled up and only about thirty or less remain. In a few years they will cease to exist.

It was the Ommeyade Khaliph Walid II who in the one hundred and twenty-fifth year of the Hegira (A.D. 743) first introduced eunuchs into his household in imitation of the Byzantine custom, and he also was responsible for the actual harem system which prevails in many countries to this day. The wretched eunuchs were obtained from the Greeks, who practised the horrible trade of mutilation and trafficked in the victims of their greed.

Though the Arabs at first looked on this innovation of the Khaliph with the greatest indignation, the practice of employing these unfortunate people remained. They were made the custodians of female honour and were often confidential spies in the palaces of the great. In the course of time they were to be met with in every wealthy household, and many of them amassed fortunes for themselves in pursuance of their activities.

On Walid II not only lies the stigma of introducing the employment of eunuchs in the palaces,

but he also broke the Koranic law in other matters, as he was passionately fond of wine and fine clothes. He decked himself in robes of brocades and silks and round his neck hung precious stones which he changed daily.

He obtained his wine from the mountain oasis of Taif near Mecca, whose grapes are renowned for their flavour and to strengthen its intoxicating effects, he mixed the grape juice with musk. It is said that he had a tank of wine built in which he would fling himself and drink till the sides of the tank showed the shrinking of the contents.

This dissipated monarch found the duty of leading the prayers five times daily in the Mosque too irksome a task, so he occasionally deputed a lady of his harem, concealed in his cloak, to preside in his stead. Needless to say this impious fraud was discovered and gave rise to much angry comment, adding to the general discontent in which he was regarded.

One night while indulging in a debauch in his country castle, he was surprised by his cousin Yazid, who, under the guise of piety and wishing to rid the country of the sinner and at the same time usurp the throne, murdered him with a thrust of his sword and thus ended the reign of this dissolute ruler, and with his death the glorious period of the Ommeyade Dynasty closed. Walid left a heritage of hate behind him, wars and insurrections became more and more frequent, till the Court of the

Ommeyade Khaliphs ceased to be and the Abbaside Khaliphs reigned in their stead, when for a century Baghdad enjoyed an era of unparalleled splendour. Favoured by its site at the junction of two great rivers, it became the centre of the world's commerce, attracting to itself the powerful captains of industry; and it was from this city that arose

the splendid edifice of trade-guilds which in one form or another has continued to dominate the world ever since, until by regular stages it developed into the mammoth stores and immense trusts of modern capitalism . . . and with the goods of the world came its learned men to bask in the sunshine of a brilliant court, where the Khaliph and his ministers, dazzling their visitors with the splendour of their imperial magnificence, directed the administration of a huge and unwieldy Empire.¹

As there is a sermon on Friday, the service is longer than usual—when it is over, I look about me with interest—I am unveiled for the moment and the scene upon which I gaze is most impressive. The great Mosque is crowded with worshippers from every Islamic country—Emirs from Bokhara and Nigeria, Indian Princes, bearded Russians, Pashas from Egypt and Turkey stand shoulder to shoulder with poor pilgrims who have saved to spend their life's savings to reach this goal.

The women around eye me with curiosity, they ply me with questions—asking me what country I

¹ *Haroun el Rashid*, by J. St. G. Philby.

come from, where is my family—am I alone: When I reply that I come from the far north, they conclude that it is Turkey; their minds cannot visualise a land farther north than that. Two young Turkish women come and talk with me, but I cannot understand them. At length a lady arrives who grasps my meaning when I mention my home is in London; she is a Syrian, whose husband has travelled to England and she welcomes me as a Moslem from that far land, kissing the palms of my hands to show her appreciation. The other women round me are no less demonstrative and as it is rather overwhelming I escape from them as soon as I politely can, and forgetting Mustapha who was to fetch me, I hand my prayer carpet to the old gentleman at the door who looks after the shoes and hurriedly leave the Mosque to walk back to the house where I have to finish my packing.

It amazes me how the custodian of the pilgrims' shoes keeps toll of the many hundreds of pairs left with him at the door of the Mosque. I see him place them in niches in a sort of huge open cupboard full of shelves. Mine are easily recognised because they are of a different shape and texture and I wonder what he would make of the lettering inside if he had time to look. If he could read, he would certainly know it was not Arabic. The heelless leather shoes of the Oriental appear to me as indistinguishable as a flock of sheep, but

one never hears of a pair being mislaid or lost. I tremble to think what would happen to our coats at a reception in London if they were not carefully ticketed. Even so they are often difficult to find, and it is quite uncanny how those shoes, seemingly so alike, never walk away on the wrong feet.

Mustapha eventually arrives at the house looking rather annoyed, but very pleased to find me safe. He tells me that after waiting some time at the place where we had agreed to meet, he entered the women's quarter to look for me and was roundly abused by the inmates who were of course unveiled and sitting down to their weekly gossip, when one of the eunuchs came and ordered him away—rather hard luck on the stately Mustapha!

At the Mosque door he was given my prayer carpet and told that I had left. I feel rather guilty when I ask him to hurry over his lunch, as I had already eaten mine. I am anxious to start on our long trek to Jeddah, and hear that some of our friends are downstairs waiting to wish us Godspeed.

I leave Medina with a heartache when I bid farewell to my host and hostess, my Muzawwir, my two faithful sheikhs. Shall I ever see any of these friends again? Sid Ahmed brings me a parting gift of rare Hedjaz stamps, which I am told are now quite impossible to obtain. He is a keen collector and I promise to send him Stanley Gibbons' catalogue of this year, as his is four years old.

The car moves ; once more I wave farewell to those friends of whose existence I knew not ten days ago, but who have shown me kindness and hospitality with a courtesy that will long be remembered. Medina will be treasured in my heart, not only for its sacred memories but also for the beauty and peace I have found.

Leaving Medina at eight o'clock (Arab time), we travelled through the hot hours until we reached Messajeed shortly before sunset, where we watered the car and refreshed ourselves with tea. Once more we sped on our way along the river-bed which is the only road through the mountains and we saw the wretched inhabitants stretch out their skinny arms imploring help. I am told these are the robbers who once preyed on the pilgrims and now the tables are turned indeed, as they thankfully receive alms from those who in the old days they so shamefully looted and mishandled.

When the mountains assume the blue shade of approaching night we find ourselves once again on the open plain and halt for the evening prayer. As there is no water available, we rub our hands with the desert sand, turn our faces to Mecca, recite the opening Chapter of the Koran and do the four Prostrations required. After that we eat our supper of cold chicken with the desert for a table and the stars for lamps.

We proceed southward on our journey past the

silent camels, past pilgrims walking wearily who hold out their jugs for us to replenish till Mustapha warns me there will be nothing left for us. I find my eyes closing, my head nodding, at last I can no longer hold out; the car stops; we spread our blankets on the ground; I see the Southern Cross before me, the Milky Way reveals a million worlds, Jupiter, Saturn and others blaze the night; my head touches the pillow and I am asleep.

March 24th.

We are awake and away again as the dawn breaks. I am startled to find my blanket damp with the heavy dew that has fallen through the night; my face, my hair, my pillow are all wet. The desert is strangely beautiful in the hush of early morning. I watch the sun rise over the Arabian hills transforming dim shadows into valleys of indigo blue, gilding the desert dunes into motionless waves of gold. We reach Rhabigh soon after sunrise, where we drink tea, have our passports examined and the motor filled with benzine.

We have now accomplished two-thirds of our journey and we pass out of the Forbidden Territory; we hurry to travel before the heat of the day. The cool freshness of dawn soon vanishes, we are again at the mercy of the pitiless sun.

In the shimmering heat I see a lake ahead, in which in turn stand grim pointed rocks, battlemented

castles and slender palm trees. At times ships appear to glide away into the blue haze and empty spaces of the land of nowhere. I can even see the ripple on the water of this phantom lake. On we sped through the tawny sand and the mirage danced before us. We are now approaching the Red Sea and get occasional glimpses of its blue waters. It was hard to distinguish which was mirage and which was sea. After what appeared endless hours a fairy City rises from the water, we see the minarets and the tall houses of Jeddah. We see real ships on a real sea ; we stop a few minutes at the Medina Gate to give up our passports, and arrive at " Beit al Begdadi " shortly after midday.

MECCA

I

*Thou art the Light of Mihrab¹ in the East,
The gracious presence by the Altar taught;
Thou art the Bush Flame of the Rabbi's feast,
The Star of Prophecy by the Magi sought!*

*Thou art the Sun adored by ancient Tyre,
Those merchant seamen of Phœnician fame;
Thou art of old the Zoroastrian fire—
The Persian Cyrus called upon Thy name.
Thou art the Light Eternal, Love Divine
Which thro' the varied lamps of Faith doth shine.*

¹ Mihrab: the niche in the Mosque pointing to Mecca and faced by the worshippers.

March 25th.

TO-MORROW after the Asr prayer we start for Mecca. As the distance is about forty-five miles I hope to enter the Holy City before sunset. My pilgrim dress is spread out ready to wear. After the bath I shall put on entirely white underclothes, then a straight white robe, over which I wear a long white coat reaching to my feet. I swathe my hair in soft muslin and a tight turban of the same kind binds my head allowing no strand of hair to show.

I cover my face with a thin straw mat pierced with holes to allow me to see and breathe from which a long white muslin veil falls half-way to my feet. Over it all I wear the hood and cape in one, which is graceful and practical and identical with the one I wore at Medina except for the colour. I find my white uniform distinctly cooler than the black one with its heavy veil; I also wear white gloves and file my nails, since to do so is forbidden on the pilgrimage.

March 26th.

This morning there were eight ships in Jeddah harbour, a sight only seen in the pilgrim season, so a friend and I went down to the landing steps to see the Hadjis arrive in the Arab dhows which carry them from ship to shore, while sailors climb like monkeys up the high masts to furl the sails as they near their destination. To-day it was a Sudanese contingent, but before I went to Medina I had the luck to see the Javanese arrive clad in their lovely robes, their women were like brilliant butterflies in all the colours of the rainbow; and once I saw land a great man from Nigeria accompanied by a suite of fifty, including three of his forty sons.

I started for Mecca at nine (Arab time), having performed the ceremonial washing and dressed myself in my pilgrim clothes. It took us two hours to cover the forty-five miles, and we arrived before sunset. The road was crowded with pilgrims going East on camels, on foot, on donkeys and in those terrible bone-shaking buses which only the strongest nerves could stand for long. After some fifteen miles of desert we reached the foothills, where the ruins of old Turkish forts are still to be seen; at regular intervals we pass wells and resting-places where the pilgrims can refresh themselves. At length we come to two tall pillars which mark the spot where we enter the sacred Territory through which none may pass except true Moslems, and none

have ever passed without making profession of allegiance to Islam ; while every route giving access to the City is bounded by similar pillars. Here the pilgrim cries :—

“ Labbayka, Allahuma Labbayka,
Labbayka la Sharika Laka Labbayka
Innalhamda wannimata Laka wal Mulka
La Sharika Laka Labbayka.”

(“ Here I am, O God, at Thy command.
Here I am ; Thou hast no partner. Here I am.
Truly Praise and Grace and Lordship are Thine.
Thou hast no partner. Here I am.”)

Within this area it is forbidden to kill any living thing. We advance through the formless dunes and arid hills, and pass a Bedouin caravan bearing its merchandise to Mecca. The camels walk alone with a dignified, disdainful tread peculiar to themselves, while their owners perform the sunset prayer. They stand erect, their faces turned to Mecca, their hands raised to their ears as they call on the sacred name of Allah ; then crossing their arms they recite the opening Chapter of the Koran, occasionally prostrating themselves in adoration, their foreheads touching the ground ; completely unmindful of the hurrying world without, they commune with the Eternal God. To believe in Allah and the Prophets, to be resigned to the Divine Will, to do good deeds in this life and await without fear or

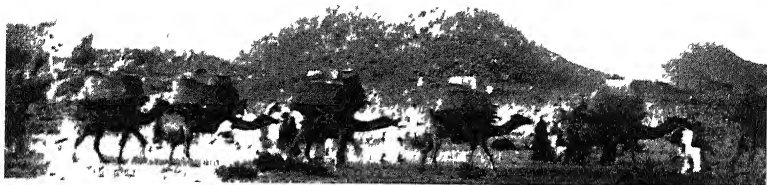
impatience the inevitable hour of death ; this is the simple faith of Islam.

We travel on through a chain of arid rocks and sandy dunes past the strange company of pilgrims uttering their supplications and the crowded throng of camels and donkeys. There is a tense feeling of excitement . . . we are nearing the Holy City. A mountain in the distance rears its rugged crest high above its fellows ; it is Jebel en Nur, the Hill of Light, in whose grim bosom lies the cave of Hira, the cave where the Prophet spent long hours in solitude and where he first became aware that he was divinely inspired. It was in this cave that he received the message that changed the world's history, and it seems fitting that the pilgrims' eyes should behold this peak which is the birthplace of Islam even before entering the Haram.¹

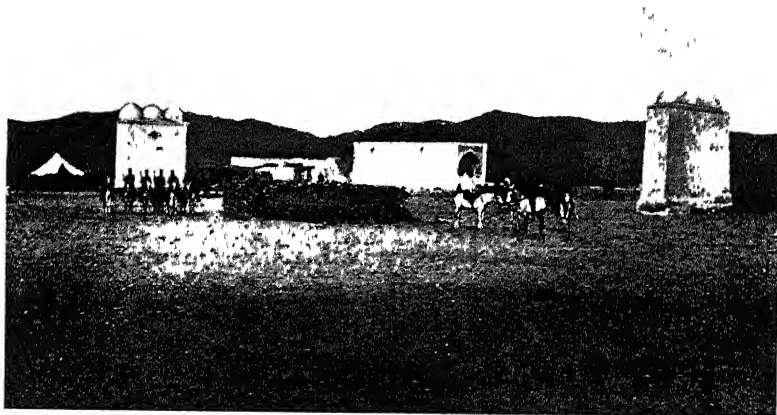
We again cry out the "Labbayka" ; in ceaseless repetition the prayer has accompanied us since we entered the Sacred Territory, but now such a volume of sound bursts forth from the pilgrims as is awe-inspiring, and we realise with quickened heartbeats that we are indeed about to enter the goal of our hearts' desire.

Divested of all earthly cares ; bound by the same obedience to the Divine Law, we approach the Holy City which contains no beauty to seduce man's mind from thought of God, no relic, save its ancient memories

¹ The Great Mosque of Mecca.



JEBEL EN-NUR ON WAY TO MECCA



PILLARS MARKING LIMIT OF SACRED TERRITORY

of idolatry and persecution, and its dust which is hallowed by the footsteps of the great Prophet.¹

Over the next hill-rise we see houses, the minarets of the Great Mosque in the centre of the City are visible. Mecca has no walls; only her hills and deserts guard her.

Some rough green gates are closed ahead, they slowly open, the police examine our passports, we pass into the street called Harat Jarwal and are in Mecca, the Holy City, which for over thirteen hundred years has been the pivot to which all Islam turns and which from time immemorial has been considered sacred ground, its idols² venerated, the Kaaba held most Holy of Temples. The Koreish were the hereditary custodians of the Kaaba, who for seven hundred years had guarded its many hundred idols, the princely tribe from which the Prophet sprang and who became his bitterest enemies when he advocated the destruction of the idols and asked his people to worship God alone.

Here Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son. Here Hagar after wandering with her babe in the wilderness found the spring which saved their lives, and Ishmail became the founder of the Arab race. We motored through the endless bazaars, many of them roofed in matting to keep them cool from the heat and glare of the sun; through narrow streets

¹ *Knights of Araby*, by M. Pickthall.

² Later destroyed by the Prophet Muhammed.

whose houses, like Jeddah stand high, and have the same picturesque shutters and balconies.

At length we stopped at the house which was to shelter me during my pilgrimage. I was received by my host and his two sons, who led me into a spacious hall, with several rooms leading out of it and up a stone staircase of fine proportions with easy shallow steps. My suite of rooms on the second floor consisted of a small anteroom opening into a very large one, furnished with the usual divans against the walls and a great bedstead which had been placed there in my honour, covered with a beautifully embroidered counterpane and a mosquito net. But alas! the bedstead spoilt the Oriental character of the room, which had the loveliest windows I had ever seen, reaching to the floor and the lattice shutters delicately carved in a floral design in a lightish wood. The high ceiling had the same tracery round it and was domed in the centre, with small windows let in, all richly carved. the stone passage on the other side of the anteroom led to the usual Arab bathroom, a stone floor with a deep hole and great jars of water standing about. On a marble ledge in the passage were porous jars with silver stoppers and the water inside them was always cool to drink. One jar was specially filled every day with water from Zem Zem, the sacred spring which rises in the centre of the great Mosque.

I was delighted with my quarters and thanked my

host for providing me with such charming surroundings. When I had discarded my veil, I unpacked my portmanteau, which did not take long, as I had none of the usual impedimenta of European clothes, no hats, evening frocks or rows of shoes. When not wearing my pilgrim dress, I would change into a thin garment and my black Arab cloak and hood.

Shortly after my arrival I was visited by the ladies of the harem. The wife of my host was a cheerful soul, mother of the two young men who helped receive me, three girls in their teens, one extremely pretty, were her nieces, and a small boy of eight was the son of a former wife who has remarried and now lives in Jeddah, where the child spends alternate months.

They bring me green caravan tea flavoured with mint and a faint aroma of ambergris, which I find delicious, and we arrange that I visit the Mosque and perform my Omra or small pilgrimage later in the evening, hoping that some of the crowd will have dispersed. Till this is done I may not remove any of my pilgrim clothes except the veil and gloves. Presently dinner is brought in on a tray and placed on the floor before us and my hostess shares my meal. When our hands are washed, she disappears to her own apartments to smoke her narghileh while I try and rest as I have a very strenuous night before me. The mosquitos buzz round and I take refuge under my net, but one of the enemy has

entered, and as I may not kill it I unpack a tube of Flit that I was given on leaving Jeddah, a priceless gift. I smear myself with it, and if the mosquitoes choose to commit suicide I feel no responsibility.

Later on that evening I start for the Mosque accompanied by my hostess in black, as she is not a pilgrim. Mustapha is in his Ihram or two towels and bareheaded, as he travelled from Jeddah and my Mutawwif, who is to guide me as did the Muzawwir in Medina. The Ihram or two seamless towels worn by the pilgrim whether prince or peasant, is to show that there is no distinction between rich and poor, that all are equal in the sight of Allah. The pilgrim's head must be uncovered, but he is allowed an umbrella to protect himself from the sun's powerful rays.

The title of Mutawwif is given to the guide in Mecca whose duty it is to help the pilgrims do the "Tawaf" or circulating of the Kaaba, while Muzawwir signifies one who visits the tomb and leads the pilgrims through the salutations.

Though I have a Mutawwif of my own, most of them are in charge of a group of pilgrims, either Indian, Moors, etc. The Mutawwif is born not made. He descends from one family and may be a veteran or a beardless youth, and his is the pure Arabic of the Koran. I have seen a boy whose years could barely have numbered twelve leading a band of pilgrims round the Kaaba, calling the

ritual in his clear young treble and later the same child, when performing "Es Saaye" in the crowded street of El Masa, was sitting astride the shoulder of a stalward Hadji while with his head thrown back he shouted the formula, glancing occasionally from side to side, to see that his charges were following the sacred words.

After a few minutes' walk through the bazaar which is feebly lit by the lights of the little shops, we arrive at the Gate of Abraham which is very imposing and beautifully carved. We climb some steps up and down a parapet which is to prevent dogs entering the Sacred Building. The forty doors of the Mosque are all protected by these parapets. Our shoes are removed and I am told to lift my veil.

I am in the Mosque of Mecca, and for a few seconds I am lost to my surroundings in the wonder of it.

We are walking on white marble through a great vault whose ceiling is full fifty feet above us, and enter pillared cloisters holding the arched roof and surrounding an immense quadrangle. The vast magnitude of the Mosque appals me. I had never imagined anything so stupendous. Khaliphs and Sultans have dowered the Mosque with the wealth and culture of Islam. Glass lamps like bowls dangle from chains and they must number many hundred thousand. During Ramadan they are all ablaze, to-night scarce half of them are lit, but the Mosque

is light enough for me to see the Kaaba in the centre of the quadrangle. Broad paths lead to it, on each side of them lie sleeping pilgrims on the gravelled quadrangle.

We walk on the smooth marble towards the Holy of Holies, the house of Allah, the great black cube rising in simple majesty, the goal for which millions have forfeited their lives and yet more millions have found their heaven in beholding it. Yet the Kaaba has never been supposed to possess divine attributes nor is any prayer addressed to it; even the idolatrous Arabs before the days of the Prophet never worshipped the Kaaba, but the idols they placed in it. The "Tawaf" is a symbol, to use the words of the poet, of a lover making a circuit round the house of his beloved, completely surrendering himself and sacrificing all his interests for the sake of the Beloved. It is in that spirit of self-surrender that the pilgrim makes the "Tawaf."

It is not righteousness to turn in prayer towards the east or the west, but he is righteous who believes in God, the Last Day, the Angels, the Books and the Prophets, and gives of his wealth in spite of his love for it, to the near of kin, the orphan, the needy, the wayfarer and the beggar, and for the manumission of slaves, and prays and pays the poor-rate, and keeps his promise when he gives one, and is patient in adversity, affliction, and in times of conflict.—*Koran*.

A black carpet covers the Kaaba whereon are



THE KAABA

blazed in letters of gold inscriptions from the Koran. Round its base pilgrims are hurrying and repeating the ritual after their Mutawwif.

It would require a master pen to describe that scene, poignant in its intensity of that great course of humanity of which I was one small unit, completely lost to their surroundings in a fervour of religious enthusiasm. Many of the pilgrims had tears streaming down their cheeks ; others raised their faces to the starlit sky that had witnessed this drama so often in the past centuries. The shining eyes, the passionate appeals, the pitiful hands outstretched in prayer moved me in a way that nothing had ever done before, and I felt caught up in a strong wave of spiritual exaltation. I was one with the rest of the pilgrims in a sublime act of complete surrender to the Supreme Will which is Islam . . . and it was with a feeling of deepest gratitude and reverence that I joined the throng to circuit the Kaaba.

Seven times we circumambulate the Sacred Temple, my Mutawwif intoning the prayer in a sonorous voice which I repeat after him, occasionally stopping at certain stations to wave the palms of the hands towards the Kaaba three times exclaiming "Allahu Akbar."¹ I then kiss the oval stone set in silver which is in the corner of the Kaaba. This black stone is not one of the old Arab idols.

¹ God is greater than all else.

It stands for a symbol "The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner" (Psalms cxviii. 12). Ishmail was looked upon as rejected and the covenant made with the children of his half-brother Isaac (the Israelites). Yet it was that rejected stone, the black stone that became the headstone of the Kaaba, the place where Hagar and Ishmail were cast out.

The black stone is unhewn, "cut out of the mountains without hands" (Dan. ii. 45). Christ made reference to it when he told the Israelites that the Vineyard (Kingdom of God) would be taken away from them and given to other husbandmen and again "Did ye never read in the scriptures 'the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner'" (Mat. xxi. 42). And again the "kingdom of God shall be taken from ye and given to a nation which bringeth forth the fruit thereof." So this stone is kissed, not as an idol, but as that symbol of the rejection of a nation which eventually became the corner-stone in the Divine order of the Universe.

The Moslems are not alone in venerating historic stones; one instance among countless others is that of Jacob, who set up a stone as a memorial and the Kings of England are still crowned over the stone in Westminster Abbey, about which so many strange stories are woven to prove its ancient origin.

When the Prophet adopted the Pilgrimage as one

of the pillars of Islam, wisely recognising its value in drawing the Moslems together in a freemasonry and brotherhood of faith, he stood near the black stone and said, "I know thou art but a stone that can do neither good nor evil," then kissed it. The stone is a symbol to the Moslem people, just as a national flag is a symbol and is revered in much the same spirit.

Most Western writers have not realised the importance of the Pilgrimage as a great bond and source of spiritual inspiration and fail to grasp its true significance or the reason of its hold over the minds of so many million people during thirteen centuries.

We next proceed to do two Rekaats at Makam Ibrahim, a small cupola supported on iron pillars opposite the silver door of the Kaaba, marking the spot where Abraham stood when rebuilding the Kaaba which had fallen into ruins. Then we return and stand up against the wall, our arms outstretched as far as they can reach, repeating supplications. The pilgrims appeared lost to their surroundings in a fervour of exaltation, some had tears running down their faces.

After we leave the Kaaba we cross over to where Zem Zem bubbles from the earth, the spring which saved Hagar and her child, and we drink of the brackish water. Hagar on finding the well ran back to her dying son and carried him to the life-

giving spring. It is the duty of every pilgrim to run the same path that the distracted Hagar ran in the long ago.

We cross the quadrangle and pass through Bab-el-Safa and down a lane to the street called El Masa or the street of running. We are now outside the Mosque and the houses are built on the slopes of the encircling hills. We start from a cul-de-sac up some wide steep steps leading to a rocky platform, El Marwa. When at the top of these steps, with our faces turned to the unseen Kaaba, we wave our hands three times crying "Allahu Akbar"; descending the steps we trot slowly along the street El Masa till we arrive at the foot of another hill, with another cul-de-sac with the same steep steps hewn out of the rock leading to it; this is Es Safa where we again turn, wave our hands and again run. All the time the Mutawwifs are chanting the ritual in clear full-throated voices while the pilgrims repeat the sacred formula after them. We run this seven times and I sink exhausted to watch the panting Hadjis. There are men carrying small children, probably born on the long journey from distant climes. The little mites sit astride their father's shoulders, solemnly gazing on the strange scene, but like their parents they never evince surprise or fear.

Some sick folks are in litters, the bearers placing them on the steps for a few seconds to wave their hands and cry "Allahu Akbar" before lifting them

on the return journey. A woman stumbles from exhaustion, her husband seizes her, places her on his back, and continues the running. I watch him till he vanishes from my sight and I wonder if he will be able to continue the running with his burden, and if his great effort will count for both. I am told he eventually completes the "Saaye," but that it only counts for one and he will have to do it again. Men and women of every Islamic nation are hurrying and supplicating. Men with long curling hair, fierce-eyed warriors from the hills, fair-haired Turks, zealots from Morocco and Tripoli, the Yamen women with their conical-shaped hats, people of every class and rank partake in the ceremony called "Es Saaye" which counts next in importance to the "Tawaf."

It is past midnight. I have completed my Omra or lesser pilgrimage, so return to the house and discard my pilgrim clothes which I shall only wear for the future when doing Omra in the Haram. When the great Pilgrimage starts I wear them continually during the three days till it finishes. In this heat I feel a bit alarmed at the prospect.

March 27th.

After sleeping the long sleep of exhaustion, I awake refreshed, and arrange to visit the Mosque as early as possible, as I am anxious to see it by daylight. I dress myself in the ordinary black of

a Moslem lady, as I am not meeting my Mutawwif, or doing Omra. Three hours after the sunrise I am once more in the Haram, accompanied by Mustapha, but already when leaving the cloisters the marble pathway through the quadrangle is hot to my stockinged feet, and I gladly keep myself veiled as a protection against the sun. There is a great crowd round the Kaaba, and I hear that Ibn Sa'ud, clad in his Ihram, is inside, washing the floor with water from Zem Zem, afterwards sprinkling it with Attar of Roses, the famous brew distilled by the Scent Merchants of Mecca, from the roses that grow in profusion at Taif, the mountain Oasis situated about seventy miles East of Mecca, which is the Eldorado of Sa'udi Arabia. I try to mount the silver steps of the pulpit, to get a view of this unique ceremony performed by the warrior King of Arabia, but the soles of my feet are burnt in the attempt, so I reluctantly give it up, and visit the famous well Zem Zem, over which is built a Moorish Kiosk, whose twilight interior is half-underground. The Well is surrounded by a parapet and iron railings, while two Arabs continually haul water from the deep, to fill the waiting jars from which goblets are replenished, as every pilgrim drinks from Zem Zem, and it is in demand in many private houses for its medicinal attributes.

There are several pulpits in the Mosque where Sunni Mullahs of the four sects lecture to their

eager disciples, and expound the subtleties of the Koran.

The servants of the Mosque number over eight hundred, including one hundred eunuchs. A great part of the year their duties are very light. Perhaps during the pilgrimage they find more work as their duty is to keep the Mosque spotlessly clean and not a speck of dirt is ever seen on the marble floor or pavements. They also feed the many pigeons that belong to the Mosque and which are too well behaved ever to sully the Haram.

I cannot imagine Mecca without its pilgrims. The Meccans admit "we neither sow nor reap, we live on the pilgrims." Without the pilgrims, the Hedjaz would probably starve. Yamen has its coffee to export, the Hedjaz is arid and Mecca lies in a valley imprisoned by stony hills, the last word in desolation.

Yet Mecca was once the centre of commercial activity as well as holiness. From here started the caravans which carried to Persia, Syria and Iraq the valuable products of Yamen, perfumes and African gums, silks from China, precious stones and spices from the East Indies, and the camels returned laden with brocades and velvets from Damascus, fine blades and embossed shields of which Byzantium had forbidden the exportation, but which the Bedouins smuggled through.

The long wars between the Greeks and Persians in the seventh century favoured the trade of Mecca which

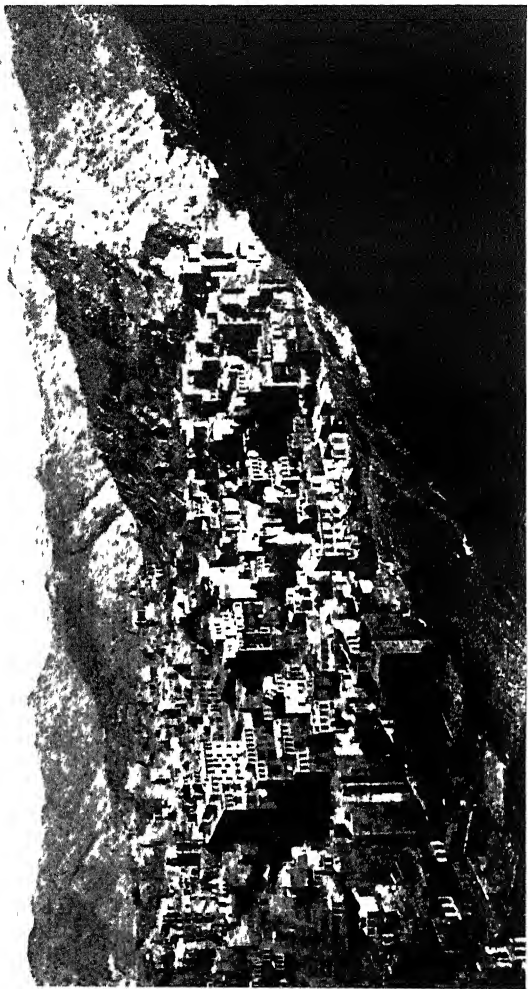
City stood on the great cross-road between the Orient and the Mediterranean. . . . The arrival and departure of the caravans was an important event in the life of the City, interesting the entire population because of a very perfect system of credit which allowed the poorest people to join in a subscription for as little as a half dinar, earning at least fifty or sometimes a hundred per cent. The vast operation of these armies of two to three thousand camels carrying gold, silver, leather and precious goods escorted by two or three hundred men, conveyed hope to the whole town from across the sands, the steppes and the reddish stones of the desert.

In the flat part of the City in whose hollow stood the sacred Kaaba, dwelt the merchant bankers, the rich slave traders and the clans that furnished several of the future Khaliphs of Islam ; also the heads of the Koreish, guardians of the Kaaba and dispensers of water to the pilgrims, while round this fashionable central quarter in the sloping streets lived the common people.

Beyond them again near the mountain ranges among the ravines were the rabble of refugees and artisan slaves, the hangers-on of the patricians and many foreigners ; all engaged in speculation and feverish activity. None left their money to be idle and usury was largely indulged in. They speculated on the rate of exchange, they gambled on the harvests, the unripe dates, the herds and spoils of war. They laid bets on the arrival and departure of the caravans, they monopolised the cereals and sold fictitious commodities and the poor Bedouin fell an easy prey to the dishonest speculator.¹

Strabo remarked " every Arab is a tradesman and

¹ *Life of Muhammed*, by E. Dermenghem.



MECCA FROM THE HILLS

often a thief," but the ancient Romans were unable to do without them; the silks required for the garments of emperors, courtesans and priests, the linens, cottons and oil. Horace mentions the treasures brought from Arabia and the trade that made the inhabitants wealthy. These luxuries cost the Romans dear, and Pliny complained "*Tanti notis deliciae constant*," on paying his account.

In those remote days a great fair was annually held in the suburbs of Mecca, which was attended not only by the Nomads of the far-flung deserts but by travellers from overseas and the merchants of the known world. Here also came the Arab poets to recite their verses before the assembled multitudes who loudly acclaimed those who found favour with them, as later on in Europe knights fought in tourneys for victory and the smiles of the fair. It was at this festival that the great laureates like Antar the prince of Arab poets first won renown. Antar was black and gloried in his blackness, and it is related of him that dark though he was, his presence gave a sense of light.

What though they blame my blackness, 'tis my glory !
I am a hero of the seed of Ham.

My heart is firmer than the roots of mountains,
My fame pervasive as the smell of musk.

My pleasure is in hunting the wild lion,
The beast of prey I visit in his den.

Yet all the while a gentle fawn has snared me,
A heifer from the pastures of Khazam.

Antar had lost his heart to a noble daughter of the Arabs and in the end his truth and loyalty overcame her first repugnance to his colour.

Those were indeed days of prosperity for Mecca, not because she was less arid and sterile than now, but because of her situation as the centre of the caravan routes on the highway of commerce of the ancient world.

Unfortunately in the wake of the caravans came troupes of dancers from Persia and Iraq, slave girls from Greece to beguile the idle hours of the Meccans and minister to their vices, and the luxuriant habits which had corroded the very heart of the neighbouring countries now took root in Arabia. Drinking and gambling became prevalent, polygamy was practised to an unlimited extent, female infants were buried alive and human sacrifices were offered up to the three hundred and sixty idols in the Kaaba and especially to the reigning favourites, the three Moon Goddesses, El Lat, El Manat and El Uzza, signifying the bright Moon, the dark Moon and the union of the two.

Christianity had now and then feebly rippled the surface of Arabia and the sterner influences of Judaism had been occasionally visible in a deeper and more troubled current; but the tide of indigenous idolatry and superstition setting from every quarter with an unbroken and unebbing surge towards the Kaaba, gave ample evidence that the faith and worship of Mecca held the Arab mind

in a thralldom vigorous and undisputed. After five centuries of Christian evangelisation it could only claim a sprinkling of disciples among the tribes, and as a converting agent was no longer operative.¹

It was a man from among themselves who was to raise them from their slough of ignorance and depravity into the light of faith, the worship of the one God. Muhammed, left an orphan at the age of six, was brought up by his grandfather, Abdel Mutalib, the head of the tribe of Koreish, the princely guardian of the Kaaba and its idols. This venerable patriarch had, in accordance with the prevailing custom, vowed the sacrifice of one of his male children to the insatiable deities of the Kaaba, and being blessed with twelve sons he selected Abdalla the eldest as a victim. But when in accordance with his vow he proceeded to the Kaaba with the boy, the voice of the Pythia attached to the Temple commanded the sacrifice to be commuted to one hundred camels, which thenceforth became the fixed "price of blood" in desert law.

Abdalla eventually married Amina, the daughter of the chief of the Zuhri family, and this couple were destined to be the parents of the future Prophet.

Muhammed never knew his father, who died in tragic circumstances, a few days before his birth, while on a journey to Yathrib. The young widow confided her infant to the care of a Bedouin woman

¹ Sir W. Muir.

of the Bani Saad tribe for the first five years of his life, in accordance with the custom of the aristocracy, who believed it made for health and manliness for a male child to be reared among the Nomads in the pure air of the desert, and I believe in these days the same rule prevails and Feisal, the late King of Iraq, spent his early years among the Bedouin tribes.

Muhammed was bereft of his mother shortly after his return to her and was very tenderly cared for by his grandfather who did all in his power to make up to the lonely child for the losses he had suffered. On the old man's death his uncle Abu Talib took charge of him and proved a firm friend when the need arose.

In early life Muhammed spent the years guarding the flocks in the desert and when he earned the title of El Amin (the trustworthy) he was in charge of the rich caravans that journeyed to Syria and back. At the age of twenty-five he married Khadijah, a kinswoman of his tribe, who owned large caravans, and it was not till he was nearing forty that he felt the gift of prophecy upon him and the urgent call to help humanity. History has shown how he fulfilled his sacred trust, leading not only his own people but millions beyond the seas to the Faith that shines to-day as bright and steadfast as when, inspired by the Divine Fire, the Prophet first promulgated the truth to his disciples.

On my return from the Mosque my hostess invites me to her apartments at the top of the house where she is entertaining several friends ; the rooms are bright with Eastern rugs and divans covered in silk, a small cage holds a bulbul. The largest room opens on to a flat roof which is now a garden of flowers which, except for a few zinnias and oleanders, are unknown to me. The folded mattresses indicate that some of the ladies are sleeping outside. The sun will soon wither this garden, but in another month the family leave for their villa at Taif in the mountains where they spend the summer. Several ladies are squatting on the divans, the older ones smoking narghilehs. Two young mothers have brought their babies who sleep placidly through all the laughter and chatter. The visitors are evidently here for the day.

My hostess had already initiated me into the secrets of the harem or women's quarters ; the bakehouse where the bread is baked to supply the needs of the large company at present inhabiting the house ; the great kitchen where she, her ladies and slaves all help in cooking and preparing the food ; the laundry where more slaves are busy washing, while the three pretty nieces are ironing and folding away the household linen ; the work-room where they sit sewing and gossiping. Everything necessary for running the home is done within

the harem and the flat roofs are utilised for airing and drying, while all have their own roof to sleep on in the spring, when the rooms are uncomfortably hot. Nor must we forget the goats who also have their own roof and are plentifully fed with bunches of burseem (clover) brought from Wady Fatima, an oasis in the hills to the West. They supply the milk and butter and are not averse to devouring old papers or anything that comes within their reach.

March 28th.

This afternoon accompanied by my host and Mustapha I motor to Muna and Arafaat to see about accommodation for the pilgrimage, as it is incumbent that I remain at Muna for three nights. On leaving Mecca we go North and pass the King's Palace on the outskirts of the City, a very imposing pile of grey granite which he built himself, the large arch of the middle entrance showing a court full of mimosa and palm trees.

Shortly after we leave the Palace behind us, we meet a large number of camels bringing pilgrims from Nejd, those fierce warriors, the redoubtable Ikhwan. Their women are carried in baskets like large cages or beehives slung on each side of the camel's hump and completely covered in by matting pierced with tiny holes like the veil I wear on pilgrimage. As they had been travelling for three or four weeks one trusts they are allowed more air

when in the desert. We turn East and make our way through a deep ravine which was blasted through the solid rock by the late King Hussein; his one good deed so the Meccans say, but perhaps that is rather unkind! Before this corridor was made, it must have been an extremely dangerous route, more especially for the camels, and many pilgrims had died while trying to cross the steep slippery rocks. Among those who had lost their lives was the great Abbaside Khaliph Mansur, he who founded Baghdad in the ninth century and did so much for the intellectual development of his people.

The designation of Dar-es-Salaam (the Abode of Peace) given to Baghdad was derived from a prophecy of the Astronomer Royal that none of its Khaliphs would die within the walls; and Mansur, its founder, was the first to prove the truth of his words when he was killed on pilgrimage while yet in the prime of life in this ill-omened pass which the late King has now made safe for the pilgrims.

Strangely enough, thirty-seven of the Khaliphs of Baghdad met their death from various causes when travelling in other lands and the prognostication of the astronomer was thus fulfilled.

On emerging from this deep ravine we soon arrive at Mūna a little desert town where the pilgrims stone the devil on returning from Arafaat. There I visit the Pilgrim Hotel and come to the conclusion

that a tent in the foothills will be preferable, hot though the weather is, as I cannot get a room to myself owing to the great demand.

In the sandy waste behind the one long street that is Müna there stands the Mosque of El Khreif. It is very old and has some fine stone arcades, also a dome beneath which the Prophet prayed during his last pilgrimage. The Mosque is only open for the Festival of Sacrifice and during these three days it is crowded day and night and the Azzan once again sounds from its two minarets. When the pilgrimage is over, the tents folded and the multitudes gone, the Mosque is left silent in its desert solitude.

We motor along a dry river-bed and the hills become steeper, great ridges of mountains appear to the North and East ; on their lower slopes these are clothed with green and grey thorny shrubs, many of them emitting an aromatic smell as you crush through them. Among the scant vegetation is a bush named Basham by the Bedouins. It is the Balm of Gilead and during the summer months incisions are made in the bark and the soft gum collected in bags. It is then used as an ointment for treating wounds, having healing properties. Legend has it that the plant was introduced by King Solomon to whom the Queen of Sheba presented it.

We have passed the two stone pillars which mark the boundary of the Sacred Territory and see long

vistas of limitless desert and hills stretching into the heart of Arabia. The car can go no farther; we turn to the left and pull up beneath Mount Arafat, a steep rock with numerous praying-places on its terraces, and topped by a granite column.

It was from here that the Prophet delivered his final address while performing the pilgrimage that proved his last.

During the tenth year of the Hegira he left Medina for Mecca accompanied by ninety thousand pilgrims. The journey was at once a triumph and a tragedy. He had made a united people of tribes once perpetually divided by war. He had led an idolatrous nation to the worship of the one God. But it had been done at the cost of twenty years' martyrdom: ten years of persecution endured at Mecca to be followed by ten years of ceaseless warfare and strife at Medina. He was an ageing man, but there must have been the uplifting knowledge that he had fulfilled his mission, accomplished the Great Work.

Though Muhammed was now virtually Emperor of Arabia with Kings and Rulers of neighbouring states seeking his friendship, he never assumed the pomp of royalty but continued to live most simply, sweeping out his little house, mending his shoes and giving of any money he had over, when the needs of his family were satisfied, to the poor widows and orphans of the Moslems who had fallen in battle. His time was equally appointed. During the day

when not engaged in prayer, he received visitors and transacted affairs of state. At night he slept little, spending most of the time in devotion. Dates and water frequently formed his only nourishment. The key of the treasures of the world lay at his feet, but he refused to use it. In his farewell to the great multitude who so short a time before had all been conscienceless idolaters, the Holy Prophet said :—

“ O People, listen to my words with understanding for I know not whether it will be permitted to me ever again to be among you in this place. Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable one to another until you appear before your Lord, even as this day and this month are sacred for all, and remember you will have to appear before your Lord who will demand from you an account of all your acts.

“ The Lord hath prescribed to every man his share of inheritance ; no testament to the prejudice of heirs is lawful.

“ The child belongeth to the parent, and the violator of wedlock shall be stoned.

“ O People ye have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you. Treat your women with loving kindness.

“ Usury is forbidden, the debtor shall return only the principal.

“Henceforth the vengeance for blood practised in the time of ignorance is forbidden and the feud of blood is abolished.

“Whosoever falsely claimeth another for his father or his master, the curse of God and of the Angels and of all Mankind shall be upon him.

“Be faithful to the trust imposed on you and shun transgression.

“And your slaves ! see that ye feed them with such food as ye yourselves eat, and clothe them with the stuff ye yourselves wear ; and if they commit a fault which you are not ready to forgive, then part with them, for they are servants of your Lord and must not be ill-treated. The slaves who say their prayers are your brothers.

“O People ! Listen to my words and understand them. Know that all Moslems are brothers one to another. Ye are one fraternity. Guard yourselves from committing injustice. Let him who is present tell it to him that is absent. Haply he who shall be told will remember better than him who hath heard it here.”

At the end of his discourse the Prophet, moved by the sight of the devotion of that multitude, most of whom had been the enemies of Islam but a short while ago exclaimed :

“O Lord, I have delivered my message and accomplished my work.”

The hosts below made answer with one voice :
 "Aye that thou hast."

He then lifted his hands to Heaven and thrice repeated : "O Lord, I beseech Thee, be Thou witness to it."

During his last days the Prophet showed himself calm and serene, and though very feeble he presided at the prayers in the Mosque, until within three days of his death. On his last appearance, supported by his cousins Ali and Fadl son of Abbas, one on either side, such a wonderfully happy smile played on his countenance that all remarked on it. After the conclusion of the prayers he addressed the worshippers assembled :—

"Moslems, if I have wronged any one of you, I am here to answer for it ; if I owe aught to anyone, all I may happen to possess belongs to you."

On hearing this a man in the crowd rose and claimed three dirhems which he had given to a beggar at the Prophet's request. They were immediately paid back with the words "Better to blush in this world than the next."

Muhammed then prayed and implored God's mercy for those present, and for those who had fallen martyrs to their faith and recommended to his people the observance of religious duties and the practice of a life of peace and goodwill ; and ended by quoting the following words from the Koran :

"The dwelling of the other life we will give unto

them who do not seek to exalt themselves on earth or do wrong ; for the happy issue will attend the pious."

After this the Prophet was never seen again in public, his strength rapidly failed. At noon on Monday the 12th of Rabi I, in the eleventh year of the Hegira (8th June, A.D. 632), while praying earnestly in a whisper, lying with his head on Ayesha's lap, the spirit of Muhammed took flight to the "blessed companionship on high," and so ended a life consecrated from first to last to the service of God and humanity.

An English author, Mr. Poole, wrote of the Prophet :

There is something so tender and womanly and withal so heroic about the man that one is in peril of finding the judgment unconsciously blinded by the feeling of reverence and wellnigh love that such a nature inspires. He who standing alone, braved for years the hatred of his people, is the same who was never the first to withdraw his hand from another's clasp ; the beloved of children who never passed a group of little ones without a smile from his wonderful eyes and a kind word for them, sounding all the kinder in that sweet-toned voice. The frank friendship, the noble generosity, the dauntless courage and hope of the man, all tend to melt criticism into admiration.

Nearly a hundred years ago Carlyle wrote of Islam :

For these twelve centuries it has been the religion and life-guidance of the fifth part of the whole kindred

of mankind. Above all things it has been a religion heartily believed. These Arabs believe their religion and try to live by it! . . . To the Arab nation it was as a birth from darkness into light; Arabia first became alive by means of it. A poor shepherd people roaming unnoticed in its deserts since the creation of the world; a Hero Prophet was sent down to them with a word they could believe; see the unnoticed becomes world notable; the small has grown world great; within one century afterwards Arabia is at Granada on this hand, at Delhi on that. Glancing in valour and splendour and the light of genius, Arabia shines through long ages over a great section of the world. Belief is great, life-giving. The history of a nation becomes fruitful, soul-elevating, great so soon as it believes. These Arabs, the man Muhammed and that one century! is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark on a world of what seemed black unnoticeable sand; but lo! the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven high from Delhi to Granada!

After the Prophet's death, his father-in-law, Abu Bakr, was proclaimed Khaliph of Islam and was the first to assume that dignity. He was succeeded in turn by Omar, Othman and Ali, who stand out as the four great Khaliphs to shed lustre on the name, by the piety of their example, and the statesmanlike qualities the two former ever showed in their supreme spiritual and temporal sovereignty. The stern devotion of these early Khaliphs to the well-being of the people and the austere simplicity of their lives were in strict accordance with the example of

the Prophet—they received in their homes the poor and oppressed and never failed to give a hearing to the meanest. Without pomp or ceremony they ruled the hearts of men by the force of their character.

The Khaliphate was never a hereditary title. The old tribal rule of electing as their leader the man they considered most worthy of the high office, was invariably adhered to, and the tenacity of the ancient Arabian custom is still deep-rooted in the heart of the Arab. Of the fourteen rulers of the Ommeyade Dynasty, it is to be noted that only four of them were succeeded by their sons.

The mission of the Great Prophet was accomplished. His life and work are not wrapped in mystery, no fairy-tale has been woven round his personality. He stands a Prophet and a legislator, an example for all days. Though many superstitions have crept into his teachings, there are not wanting signs of a great revival to the pristine purity of the faith he inculcated.

The passages in the Koran containing ornate descriptions of Paradise, invariably figurative, have been distorted by ignorant writers. It cannot be over-emphasised that the Moslem conception of Paradise is not a sensual one. Much has been made of the word "houri," which is simply a form of the Arabic "hur" plural of "ahwar" when applied to men and "haura" when applied to women; signifying intense whiteness of the

white of the eye, or intense blackness of the black thereof; and is a symbol of purity and there is no reason to confine the term specially to women, as it applies to all things pure, animate or inanimate. The Koran never speaks of any conjugal relations being maintained in the physical sense in the world to come.

In Chapter 47, verse 15 : "A parable of the garden which those guarding against evil are promised. Therein are ewers of water that do not alter and ewers of milk, the taste of which does not change, and ewers of wine delicious to those who drink, and ewers of honey clarified; and for them therein are all fruits and protection from their Lord."

This description does not mention the actual blessings of Paradise; for they are blessings which, to use the words of the Prophet Muhammed, "No eye has seen, nor any ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of men to conceive of them," but it is a parable which has been used to convey the conception of felicity to all mankind.

Also the reward as described in "Hur" is not only for men, but also for women, as we read in Chapter 44, verse 54, "Thus will we unite them (men and women) with the pure and the beautiful."

The appeal of the Koran is made to the intuitive reason of mankind; the unity of God, His Majesty, His Mercy, form the constant and never-ending theme of the most eloquent and soul-stirring passages.

has involved the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of lives ; also many of the devout, on feeling the approach of death, are brought to Arabia wishing to die on pilgrimage and lie buried in the Sacred Territory. I noticed several litters carrying the old and decrepit round the Kaaba and perambulating El Masa, and am told there will be some who go to Arafaat on pilgrimage day never to return alive. Death comes easily to these people, and where they fall they are buried in a hole scooped in the sand, wrapped in their pilgrim towels. They are gone to Allah's mercy. Allah Karim !

On the top of Jebal Rahma we are rewarded by a cool breeze and a lovely view, for the arid mountains are now coloured by the setting sun and the desert sands turn mauve and pink.

✓ Does this land hold nothing but rock and sand, or does it hide in its grim fastnesses a mineral wealth ? In old days the gold mines of Ophir were renowned throughout the whole world and surely their treasures are not exhausted. Perhaps the fear of foreign exploitation and the history of alien aggression in other Islamic countries deter this people from realising their own resources. They have kept their land free and their Holy Cities safe. The Hedjaz has lived on its pilgrims for centuries, but now the pilgrims become fewer each year. Once they numbered two hundred thousand or more, but lately owing to world

depression they are scarcely one hundred thousand and Arabia suffers. When in Jeddah I heard of possible oil developments. American and English were both endeavouring to obtain concessions. A rich Moslem, the ex-Khedive of Egypt, is establishing a State Bank with a branch in London. If the concession for the oil industry materialises, it will go to a Christian firm, but the country knows that the interests of Islam and the sanctity of the Holy Places will be safeguarded by the present strong Ruler. "Inshallah," may the sun of prosperity shine on this land even as the sun of Heaven shines, fiercely without a break.

Before starting the rocky descent, I looked to the East where among the hills lies the mountain oasis of Taif. When the Prophet first gave his message, to the Arabs and ordered them to worship the one God, he made many enemies among the Meccans, and especially among his own tribe the Koreish who guarded the idols. On the death of his uncle Abu Taleb he lost his best friend and protector, his life was endangered and he was forced to fly from his persecutors. He had then about seventy faithful disciples whom he advised to take refuge in Christian Abyssinia, whose ruler was famed for his benevolence and justice, but he himself refused to leave the country, so he came to Taif, hoping among those simple cultivators of the soil, to find asylum; but they proved even more

adamant than the Meccans, and after enduring very rough treatment at their hands, Muhammed eventually escaped to Medina with one faithful companion Abu Bakr, and Taif lost the distinction of giving sanctuary to the Prophet.

The lot of the seventy disciples who sought refuge in Abyssinia proved a more fortunate one. When the Meccans sent representatives to the King asking for their extradition on the ground that they had renounced their old religion and adopted a new one, the Negus sent for the exiles and enquired of them if what their enemies had stated was true.

“What is this religion for which you have abandoned your former faith?”

Their spokesman replied: “O King, we were plunged in the depth of ignorance, we adored idols, we ate dead bodies, we disregarded every feeling of humanity, we knew no law but that of the strong. Then God raised among us a man of whose birth, truthfulness and honesty we were aware and he called us to the unity of God and forbade us the worship of idols. He enjoined on us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to respect the rights of neighbours. He forbade us to speak evil or to eat the substance of the orphans. He ordered us to abstain from sin, to offer prayers, to render alms, and to observe the fast. We have believed in him and we have accepted his teachings. For this reason

our people have risen against us and persecuted us in order to make us forgo the worship of God and return to the worship of idols. They have tortured and injured us, until finding no safety among them, we have come to thy country and hope thou wilt protect us from them."

The appeal of the fugitives was immediately granted by the King and the Meccans returned to their country discomfited.

I failed to distinguish Taif, as the light was failing, but from all accounts it must be to Arabia what Simla is to India. It stands six thousand feet above the sea, an oasis of the mountains with a plentiful supply of water, and I believe the only spot in all Arabia where snow has been seen to lie and its water has frozen in winter. Trees, flowers and fruit flourish through the summer; birds and monkeys riot in the gardens. The King and most of his Ministers own villas, and the Meccans retire there for the hot season, when their city becomes wellnigh intolerable.

March 29th.

This is the happiness of the Arab: "green trees, sweet water and a kind face"¹ . . . these make his garden.

An hour after sunrise I motor to Hadj Abdulla

¹ An old Arabian saying.

Philby's house on the edge of the City near the King's Palace. Though close to the arid hills there is a good water supply and a really lovely garden. Surrounded by his books, with his many interests, I am not surprised that when at Jeddah he is always ready to return to Mecca, to his charming little house and all his flowers which he tends himself. Whenever he leaves for Jeddah his car is piled up with flowers, which are much appreciated by the residents, as Jeddah has no gardens.

It is when dwelling in places like Jeddah or Mecca that it comes home to one what it means to live in stark staring aridity; where there is no tree worthy of the name to cast a shadow; no orchards and pleasant greenery; only a few grey thorny bushes on the sterile slopes.

If Mecca could stir up longings she would see Himyarite princes hurrying there at the head of their warriors. Winter and summer are alike intolerable. Nowhere in Mecca do the springs gush forth as at Jowatha. Not a blade of grass to rest the eye . . . no hunting. . . . Instead only merchants, that most contemptible of all professions.

Thus did the Negro poet, El Haigotan, depict it some centuries ago, and it is still the same grim City, and small wonder that the Arab dream of Paradise has always held green meadows and running water, that the Oriental invariably created a garden as a most precious gift to the memory of

his Beloved. All have heard of the Taj Mahal, that marvel of exquisite taste raised by a Mogul Emperor as a memorial to his dead wife ; but how few of us know the romance of the Ommeyade Khaliph Motamid, King of Seville, who planted a whole hill above Cordova with almond trees, that his living Queen might enjoy the sight of the white blossom in the spring when she looked from the Palace windows ; because she had once expressed admiration for the snows on the mountain-tops.

Persia and Turkey have always been famed for the beauty of their gardens, not only for the blossoming of their flowering shrubs, but for their architectural planning and intricate and graceful designs. The Oriental is a lover of perfume and often carries a small tube containing the essence of rose or jasmine, and it is recorded of the Prophet that he enjoyed sweet scents and the smell of flowers.

In this sun-stricken land Mr. Philby has achieved a noted success in inducing his lovely garden to thrive and blossom. His house is well tended by two female slaves, one of them given him by the King, who owns some hundreds, and on great occasions such as a marriage or birth in the royal family he manumits a few according to the precept of the Koran which does not encourage slavery. However, the slaves generally refuse to leave their comfortable quarters for the unknown.

In a street called Suk-el-Abid there is a regular

slave market and long stone benches run in front of the houses, where in early morning and late evening sit the slaves awaiting purchasers. The slaves are mostly African and of all ages, the women wearing veils which they lift when requested. There is scarcely a house in Mecca that has not got its slaves. Those where I am staying seem perfectly happy and are treated as part of the family. One jet-black old lady is a great character and rules the roost. I saw her try to box the ears of Abdullah, a youth who is twice her size, so he lifted her off the ground and kissed her, when she ran away laughing and shaking a withered finger.

War and conquest originated the practice of slavery in Arabia, but the kidnapping of human beings by dealers for trade purposes is forbidden by the Koran, which reiterates that the duty of a Moslem is to liberate his slaves whenever possible. As the manumission of slaves is considered a meritorious act, whenever a Moslem owner dies, he or she directs by will that so many slaves are to be freed and given a sum of money sufficient to keep them in comfort. As the result of the co-operation of King Ibn Sa'ud and the British Government, each in his own sphere, for the suppression of the slave trade, they will automatically cease to exist in Arabia at no distant date, the sale and importation of new slaves being prohibited by King Ibn Sa'ud.

I cannot do better to illustrate the origin of slavery than quote from Amir Ali in *The Spirit of Islam* :—

The practice of slavery is co-eval with human existence. Historically its traces are visible in every age and in every nation. The Jews, Greeks and Romans recognised and practised both kinds of slavery, predial servitude as well as household slavery. Christianity as a system and a creed raised no protest against slavery, enforced no rule, inculcated no principle for the mitigation of the evil ; on the contrary Christianity enjoined on the slave absolute submission to the will of his proprietor. It found slavery a recognised institution and adopted the system without any endeavour to mitigate its baneful character or improve the status of slaves.

The white Christian in America could never legitimise the issue of his illicit connection with his negro slave woman. The mother of his illegitimate children and her descendants could be sold by his legitimate white issue at any time.

Islam recognises no distinction of race or colour ; all are equal not only in theory but in practice. In the mosque, the palace, the market, the guest chamber they mix without reserve and without contempt. The first Muezzin of Islam was a negro slave ; Katabed-din, the first King of Delhi and the founder of the Mussulman Empire in India, was a slave. Slaves have ruled kingdoms and founded dynasties. In Islam the slave of to-day is often the Grand Visier of to-morrow.

The Koran advocated the manumission of slaves and the Prophet looked upon the custom of slavery as temporary in its nature and held that its extinction was sure

to be achieved by the progress of ideas and change of circumstances. He ordered that slaves should be allowed to purchase their liberty by the wages of their service or if they had no present means of gain he provided that sums should be advanced to them from the public treasury, and it is simply an "abuse of words" to apply the word "slavery" in the English sense to any status known to the legislation of Islam.

March 30th.

I generally manage a short sleep during the middle day, when the street beneath my window lies drowsy in the heat, the pilgrims at rest in the Mosque; when only the pad of the camels' feet can be heard if I listen as long strings of them pass laden with grain to feed the hadjis.

But to-day a young Bedouin is singing a song of the desert. Full-throated and sonorous is the voice; a wild song holding a strange melancholy—a yearning appeal—telling of the freedom and great spaces that are his heritage where time does not count and his wants are few. The milk of his camel provides him food and drink, her wool is woven by his women for his tent and clothing, her droppings supply him with fuel. He knows the scorching heat and the bitter cold; hunger and thirst stalk grim shadows beside him; he invariably has a blood feud with another tribe and in the desert many enemies lie in wait. He is undaunted. He holds his unfettered liberty as

more precious than life itself, to him the changing world carries no meaning, empires may crash, the vast solitudes hear no echo. His code is the immemorial code of the desert, to show the stranger hospitality, to share his last crust with a friend, to face misfortune with resignation, while to his enemy he evinces a relentless hate.

For centuries he has followed the primitive life of his ancestors, as lived in these sun-scorched deserts since the birth of time. But now, touched by a magic wand, this land starts to blossom into green pastures.

Till Ibn Sa'ud was inspired to change the face of Arabia, the Bedouin had to raid to live. Booty was his god, of loyalty or religion he had none. Now he follows agriculture in the many settlements created by the genius of the King, who foreseeing the economic necessities of his country has given these nascent colonists his help in money and kind, to enable them to build houses and sink wells.

Wherever there was a suitable spring there grew an agricultural centre and to every village thus formed there came a teacher to instruct the population in religion and the arts of reading and writing.

These desert men, warriors and colonists combined, are the famous "Ikhwan," the puritan brotherhood who are the backbone of Sa'udi Arabia, created by the genius of the Puritan



Sheikh Hafiz
Wahba

H R H Emu Sa'ud
(the Crown Prince
and the Vicroy
of Nejd)

H M King Ibn
Sa'ud

H R H Emir
Khalid

H R H Emir
Muhammed

H M KING IBN SA'UD WITH THREE OF HIS SONS
AND HIS MINISTER IN LONDON

Monarch, Abd el Aziz Ibn Sa'ud, perhaps the greatest Arab since the days of Muhammed.

Mr. Kenneth Williams, who has spent fifteen years in close contact with the Middle East, writes of this illustrious Ruler :

The unity of Arabia is a political myth, as no one knows better than Ibn Sa'ud. Nevertheless the memory of the Arab's greatness ; of the time when they headed the march of civilisation, is still vivid and can never die. Yet whereas some Arabs think of the splendours of Damascus and Baghdad, the Wahabi conqueror thinks rather of the glories of the first four Khaliphs who ruled from Medina, than of the later Ommeyade and Abbaside Khaliphs who, if they brought fame, also brought corruption to the world of Islam. In no conceivable Arab polity, moreover, would the Wahabis be content to take second place ; they hold themselves to be " the " Arabs, the real sons of the free, uncontaminated desert.

And the long centuries of desert warfare, bred in the Bedouin, will occasionally leap forth ; they are warriors before they are agriculturists, and there is something primitive and pathetic in their prayer to the King : " Oh Abd el Aziz, remember we are like a pool of water, that, when confined, becomes stagnant, and when running, clears itself." It is their cry for the old, old life of warfare and raids.

Later in the afternoon, in the company of my

hostess and Mutawwif, I visit the graves of Khadijah and others of the Prophet's family at the cemetery named El-Maala. Khadijah was the first wife of Muhammed, and his only one for twenty-five years, till her death. She was his first disciple, and helped and cheered him when all the world and his powerful relations were against him. It was his custom to retire to the cave of Hira in the hills to meditate, and one day he returned trembling, calling to her to cover him with a blanket, as he had seen a vision, and knew not whether for good or evil, and feared he was possessed. She put her cloak around him, and endeavoured to comfort him, replying :

“God is our Protector, and surely would not allow such a thing to happen to thee who speaketh the truth and keepeth faith with all men. What has befallen thee? Hast thou seen aught terrible?”

When Muhammed told her what had happened to him in the cave, she answered :

“Rejoice, O my husband, be of good cheer. Thou shalt be the Prophet of thy people. It is not a jinn, but an angel of God thou hast seen.”

Muhammed then returned to the cave, and spent his solitary watches in the hills, seeing the Crescent Moon of Ramadan, wax and wane, when there came to him a mysterious being, holding a piece of silk covered with writing and commanding Muhammed, who was illiterate, to read. Sud-

denly his spirit was illuminated and he knew instinctively the words.

“Read in the name of Thy Lord Who hath created all things; Who hath created man of congealed blood. Read Thy Lord is the most beneficent who taught by means of the pen. Taught man that which he knew not.”

The vision left him terrified, he prostrated himself on the ground and remained for long hours rigid and unconscious of the outside world. On returning to his house he lay down shivering as if with cold; Khadijah was frightened at his appearance and covering him in a blanket left him alone. He shortly rose and said: “I am commanded to call mankind to God but who will believe me?” She answered: “I believe thee.”

“From then onward, inspired by a great Ideal, fearlessly preaching the truth revealed to him, leading almost alone a seemingly forlorn hope against the impregnable stronghold of superstition, facing odds with a calm resolution, which yielded nothing to ridicule or danger, Muhammed presented a spectacle of grandeur which cannot fail to win sympathy and admiration.”

Unfortunately Khadijah who was many years older than Muhammed, did not live to see his eventual triumph. She died at Mecca in her sixty-fifth year, and the Prophet wept bitterly at her tomb and mourned her all his life.

In after years even the influence of his favourite wife, Ayesha, failed to obliterate her memory, and one day many years after her death he confided to Omar, the future Khaliph, that Khadijah was his best treasure. Fatima was the daughter of this happy union.

Khadijah's tomb in common with all others has been razed to the ground by the Wahabis. The vast cemetery of El-Maala is now a stretch of empty desert where once stood mausoleums and domed cupolas of grace and charm, erected by pious hands in memory of the great dead. These Puritans wish to cleanse Islam of all the superstitious growth of centuries and restore it to the simple faith taught by the Koran, and are no doubt in the right, but one cannot but regret the disappearance of so much beauty.

No dervishes are permitted in Arabia, no tombs of holy men to be worshipped by the ignorant, no charms may be sold. Only God is worthy of adoration.

When Ibn Sa'ud, the Sovereign Lord of Nejd, descended upon the Hedjaz and swept the feeble King Hussein, the puppet of Europe, into the sea, he cleansed the country of a lot of abuses and made safe the pilgrim paths to the Holy Cities; while his soldiers kicked Hussein's treasured gold umbrella into the market place, where it lay for several days in the dust, to be eventually sold for

a few piastres, and it is said his turban was wound round a dog's head and let loose in the street.

The entry of King Ibn Sa'ud's army into Mecca in 1924 was as bloodless a victory as that of the Prophet over one thousand three hundred years before. He gave them strict orders to avoid the slightest act of violence in the sacred city. Ibn Sa'ud's men entered Mecca, not as the members of a victorious army but as Moslems on pilgrimage to their Holy City, each dressed in two unsewn pieces of towel, the dress of "Ihram," and as soon as they had performed Tawaf and Es-Saaye they went round the streets assuring the population that they would not be molested in any way. A little later Ibn Sa'ud followed, clad in the same pilgrim garb; a devout Moslem entering the sacred city in all humility, not a conqueror effecting a triumphal march.

When eventually Medina and Jeddah had capitulated and the whole of the Hedjaz was his by right of conquest, he issued a manifesto to the Moslem world to the effect that his sole purpose was to restore the liberty of the Pilgrimage and to convoke a Conference to determine the future administration of the Holy Places. The fact that he afterwards became King of the Hedjaz was no violation of that promise because it was soon discovered that there was no one better qualified than he to be the custodian of the Holy Land of Islam.

The King's generosity is unbounded and nothing

grieves him so much as to find that his resources are not always sufficient for his grants and gifts. His palace is open to all to enter, and the Bedouin, when addressing him, looks him full in the eyes and hails him simply as Abd el Aziz.

Once in 1925 while the King was sitting at the window of his palace in Mecca, a Bedouin came and stood in front of it and said: "O Abd el Aziz! how can you sit there and let me starve?" To which the King replied: "Come in and tell me how it is you are starving."¹

So the Bedouin went into the Palace and explained to his Sovereign how on arriving at Mecca the previous night he was told at the guest house he was too late for supper, and the officials refused to give him anything to eat. Ibn Sa'ud sprang to his feet in anger and ordered that the Superintendent and his subordinate be brought to him. On their arrival he asked why the man, if too late for supper, was not given some bread and dates, and as a lesson that in future no one should be refused food, no matter what the time was, he suspended them for a fortnight.

In his dress and mode of living the King sets an example of extreme simplicity. He rises to greet the humblest guest with the same charm and courtesy that he shows to the head of a great tribe, and at his table all are welcome.

¹ From a lecture by H. E. Sheikh Hafiz Wahba.

When the religious luminaries of Nejd passed a resolution that the celebration of the anniversary of his accession to the throne of Sa'udi Arabia was a European innovation and asked him to cancel the ceremony, the King, feeling that the question only concerned himself and did not affect any of the greater issues, bowed to the decision of the pious Ulemas, quoting the verse in the Koran: "O Lord, I have sinned against myself and if thou forgivest me not and hast not mercy on me, I shall surely be among the losers."

But when the same religious luminaries tried to oppose the installation of wireless telegraphy and the advent of the motor-car, Ibn Sa'ud met their opposition with a stern refusal and told them that there is nothing in the Koran that can justify their attitude of antagonism to improvement in communication or to scientific advance. Wireless now knits the far deserts of the vast Arab Empire and Mecca and Riyad have two powerful stations, but the King had to overcome the opposition of a people who looked on wireless as witchcraft and attributed its origin to the Evil One, even as the knights of Charlemagne were filled with alarm when they saw the Arab horsemen issuing forth from the inside of the magnificent clock of exquisite workmanship which Haroun el Rashid at the zenith of Arab civilisation gave to the Emperor as a present. They, too, thought it was magic and

feared its evil influence. One cannot help reflecting on how times have changed, when the Arabs, one time custodians of civilisation, fail to recognise its products to-day.

But perhaps the perfect peace and absolute security which reign over the Hedjaz are the greatest of the blessings of the King's benevolent rule. Truly can it be said of Abd el Aziz that he seeks not his own glory but the glory of Islam.

March 31st.

My hostess tells me she would much enjoy a ride in my car, so we arrange to start after the Asr prayer, hoping the sun will have lost some of its fierceness. I impress on Mustapha that if possible we should prefer getting up among the hills and perhaps finding a breeze. The city lies stagnant in the heat, enclosed by hills ranging from 600 to 2,000 ft. Yet history relates that this sun-stricken land is the cradle of the world's religions. Arab tradition insists that Adam built the Kaaba, which having fallen into ruins Abraham rebuilt by Divine command. At the dawn of civilisation human feet trod this desolate pit heaped with volcanic rock without a green blade or tree, which is still the heart and centre of a great Faith. Millions of men and women from far countries, from China, Morocco, from all Islamic lands, look to Mecca as the goal, the culmination of their heart's desire.

It is recorded that when Muhammed was a young man, before his call to Prophethood, the necessity for the reconstruction of the Kaaba arose. The requisite material being all provided, the tribe of Koreish undertook the work. In the course of construction, a dispute arose as to who should have the proud privilege of laying the black stone ; the quarrel might have resulted in the outbreak of inter-tribal feuds and the consequent destruction of a number of families, when there arose a hoary veteran with his advice to refer the matter to the first man to appear at the Kaaba the following day. The proposal was unanimously adopted.

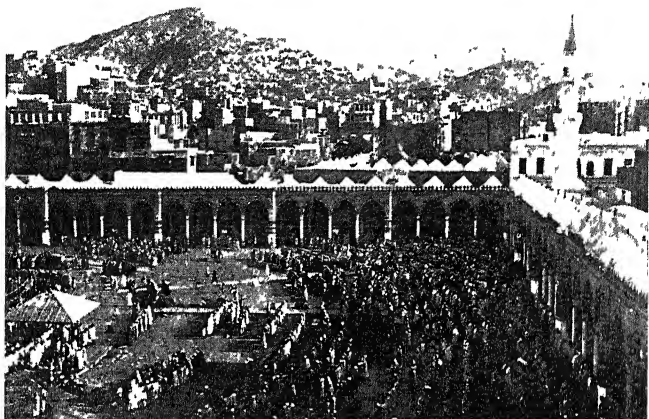
All were waiting eagerly the next morning when, to the general satisfaction, shortly appeared the youth Muhammed " Al amin " (the trustworthy), a sobriquet by which he was already known, who took a strong sheet woven of camel hair and placing on it the black stone he invited the headman of every clan to hold the sheet at the corners and help place the stone in position, thus avoiding any jealousy or quarrel that would certainly have resulted in bloodshed.

There is a hill outside the City called Jebel-el-Kubeys surmounted by a small Mosque, and Mustapha insists we should visit it. We enter the car and drive a few hundred yards to the gate of Es-Safa ; here to my surprise and disappointment we have to dismount and climb. There is no other

road to Jebel-el-Kubeys. My hostess is a large lady, but insists on visiting the little Mosque, where there will probably be a breeze and certainly a fine view. We ascend by short flights of rough-hewn steps between the houses which cover the slope of the hill and after a strenuous climb we at length emerge into the open, where stands the Mosque of Bilal the Abyssinian slave whom Abu Bakr manumitted. He then became the first Muezzin of Islam because of his glorious voice. Poor Bilal, before he was ransomed by Abu Bakr, had been very cruelly treated by his late master on account of his being a Moslem, and every means of torture had been tried to induce him to recant. As he refused to do so he would probably have died if Abu Bakr had not stepped in and released him from his cruel bondage. Though his early life was full of trouble, Bilal enjoyed a happy old age, spending many peaceful years at Medina calling the faithful to prayer from the beautiful minaret that bears his name in the Mosque of the Prophet.

On the summit of Jebel-el-Kubeys there is a breeze, also a magnificent view. We look down into the Meccan valley with the Haram in its centre; on our left is the great ravine Zeyed, on which some of the finest and newest houses are built. With Mecca stretched beneath us and the life-giving breeze we sit down to enjoy our surroundings.

It is from this hill that the Meccans watched



CORNER OF THE GREAT MOSQUE, MECCA, SHOWING THE
CONGREGATION STANDING IN PRAYER



GATE OF ALY IN THE GREAT MOSQUE, MECCA

the Prophet do his first Omra or lesser pilgrimage, seven years after his flight to Medina. Though a truce had been called, the Koreish refused to hold converse with their kinsman or the pilgrims who accompanied him, and during the three days of ceremony they evacuated the City and from these heights watched the Moslems performing the rites of Omra or the lesser pilgrimage. What a strange spectacle the silent deserted City must have appeared to the exiles, banished for long years from their homes, thus to return to the empty houses of their childhood. In strict conformity with the terms of the treaty, they returned to Medina after three days without exchanging a word with their erstwhile friends and relations.

Not so very many years later the Prophet entered Mecca as a conqueror. The rebellious City lay at his mercy, but ignoring his many years of persecution, he forgave those who had so cruelly wronged him and sought his life. Four criminals who were noted ruffians were beheaded, otherwise a free pardon was extended to all. Not a house was looted, not a woman insulted. The Moslem army showed a marvellous discipline and self-restraint in view of what they themselves, their relations and co-religionists had suffered in the past. Probably in the annals of history no triumphant entry into a conquered city has been so peaceful and bloodless.

Bilal's Mosque is now closed by order of the Wahabi Government who feared he might be worshipped as a saint. Behind the Mosque is a small open café where stand great jars of water. Evidently this hill is a favourite spot for the Meccans seeking rest and change as we found many pilgrims sipping tea and coffee or sleeping in the shadow of the Mosque. As the sun set behind the Western hills the Azzan sounded from the Great Mosque beneath, the moving voice that calls to prayer.

God is greater than all else. God is greater than all else. I bear witness there is but one God, I bear witness that Muhammed is the Apostle of God. Come to prayer. Come to prayer. Come to salvation. Come to salvation. God is greater than all else. God is greater than all else. There is no Being worthy of worship but He.

From the great world of Islam, from the ends of the earth the summons goes forth and a wave of prayer is wafted to Allah from countless worshippers in desert camps, in obscure oases, in crowded cities. To the North, to the South, to the East to the West the glorious voice calls; from the far minarets drops earthwards like a faint echo: "Come to prayer. God is greater than all else."

A small house is pointed out to me as the home of the great Senussi, he who fought the Italians when they invaded Tripoli. When Italy joined the Allies in the War he then numbered England among

his enemies and attacked us on the outskirts of Egypt. Eventually he was forced to leave the country and escaped in a submarine to Turkey. After the Armistice he wished to visit Mecca. The British Authorities refused him leave to travel by the Suez Canal, so he entered Arabia by way of the Syrian Oasis Jauf and Hail and took up his residence in Mecca. Jebel-el-Kubeys must have appealed to the desert chief accustomed to wide spaces and long vistas. Here he lived the last years of his life in peace and died a short time ago.

The sun has set, the brief Arabian twilight is over; we descend the steep path into the stifling City.

MECCA

II

April 1st.

THIS morning I find myself with some hours on my hands for the first time since entering Mecca. No visitors are expected, all is in preparation for the great pilgrimage, so I take the opportunity to write a few lines on that much misunderstood word "harem" and woman's position in the general scheme of things in Arabia.

The word "harem" is derived from the Arabic "Muharum," meaning sacred or forbidden, and is simply the term used to describe the part of the house reserved for the use of the women; it is a sanctuary, but far from being a prison. Neither is it crowded with wives and ladies of easy virtue, as is so often imagined.

It is a mistake to think that the seclusion of women is an Islamic institution. The Greeks even in their period of highest culture imprisoned their women within their houses and denied to them any rights, even that of inheritance. The Spartans often destroyed such women as could not be expected to give birth to healthy children, with the

result that the proportion of women to men decreased to such an extent that one wife had several husbands. In Rome women had their separate quarters and the husbands exercised absolute power of life and death over them and treated them as slaves. In Persia there was no recognised law of marriage, or if any existed it was ignored. The condition of women among the Arabs of the cities and towns in the days of ignorance before the advent of the Prophet was degraded in the extreme. The women were regarded as the chattels of their men-folk; they formed an integral part of the estate, and the widows of the deceased descended to his son or sons by right of inheritance.

Among the Nomads, who had not adopted the loose notions of morality prevalent among the Romans, Greeks and Persians, the women enjoyed greater freedom. They accompanied the warriors to battle and inspired them to heroism; valour and generosity were the greatest virtue of the men and chastity that of the women. They were not as among the Greeks, says Peron, "the creatures of misery." An insult offered to a woman of a tribe would set in flame the desert from end to end of the peninsula.

The seclusion of women is of very ancient date and followed on the edge of barbarism when men and women lived as the animals do to-day. But with the progress of civilisation man began to think

of woman as the mother of his children ; in her lap lay the destiny of the unborn generations ; she must be cared for and guarded. But unhappily for her, she was given no rights of citizenship and she degenerated into a household chattel.

Muhammed enforced as one of the essential teachings of his creed "respect for women"; he secured to them rights which they had not before possessed, and he placed them on a footing of perfect equality with men in the exercise of all legal powers and functions. Women in the early days of Islam expounded law and jurisdiction, founded colleges for their poorer sisters in which to study and even led armies in the field of battle. It was Islam that removed the bondage in which women were held from the very dawn of human history and gave them a social standing and legal rights, such as were not granted them in England till many centuries later.

I refer to the fact that under Islam women are entitled to separate ownership of property whether married or not ; they have absolute control of their property and can dispose of it as they choose.

With regard to the custody of their children, the mother is entitled to the care of her male child till he has completed his seventh year, and of her female child until she has attained puberty, and the right is not lost though she may have been divorced by her husband.

With regard to maintenance, the wife is entitled to be provided with proper accommodation, separate from her husband's relations, and to be maintained suitably according to his own means and the position in life of both. If the husband neglects to maintain her, she can pledge his credit. She has also the right, if her husband has more than one wife, to demand equal treatment.

The marriage settlement or "Mahr" to which the bride becomes entitled is an obligation imposed by law on the husband as a mark of his esteem. If no sum has been specified at the time of marriage, she is entitled to the "mahr" that is usually fixed for the ladies of her family. The widow's claim for the "mahr" is a debt payable out of her husband's estate and it must, like other debts, be paid before legacies and before distribution of the inheritance. When a husband divorces his wife he is compelled to maintain her for at least three months. If during that period she is found to be pregnant he is then bound to maintain her and the child till, if a boy, he is seven years and, if a girl, till she is fourteen.

The improvement effected in the position of women by the Great Prophet of Arabia has been acknowledged by all unprejudiced writers, and it is false calumny to assert that the Islamic system lowers the status of women and denies them a soul.

In the early centuries of Islam many women

occupied exalted positions and played conspicuous parts in the history of their age, leaving honoured names to posterity. Sakina, the great-granddaughter of the Prophet, was a beautiful and brilliant woman, "*la dame des dames de son temps, la plus belle, la plus gracieuse, la plus brillante de réalité,*" as Peron called her, who, herself no mean scholar, delighted to converse with the learned.

The first woman in history to hold a *salon* was Khuzurum, wife of Al Mahdy in the days of the Abbaside Khaliphs. She was very influential in state affairs and was consulted on every matter of importance, and it was by her advice that her husband equipped the desert highway to Mecca with *caravanserais* and reservoirs for the use of the pilgrims. She was also distinguished for her great works of charity; and at her house were to be met the governors, ulemas and poets of the day. During the Khaliphate of her son she was joint administrator of the Empire during the first few years.

Zobeida, wife of Haroun el Rashid, played an important rôle in the history of her time and left a lasting monument to herself in the great aqueduct at Mecca, bringing a plentiful supply of water to a City which she found suffering for want of a proper water supply when she visited Mecca on pilgrimage.

In the fifth century of the Hegira, the Sheikha Shuhda lectured publicly at the great Mosque of Baghdad to large audiences on literature, rhetoric

and poetry and was given the name of Fakhr-en-Nisa (the glory of womanhood). Fortunately for this lady she did not live among the co-religionists of St. Cyril or she might have shared the awful fate of Hypatia.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, wife of the English Ambassador in Turkey in 1717, wrote to her sister :—

I see you have taken your ideas of the harem from that worthy author Dumont, who has written with equal ignorance and confidence . . . 'tis very pleasant to observe how tenderly he and all his brethren voyage writers lament the miserable confinement of the Turkish ladies, who are perhaps freer than any ladies in the universe, and are the only women in the world that lead a life of uninterrupted pleasure exempt from cares ; their time being spent in visiting, bathing, running their houses, or the more agreeable amusement of spending money and inventing new fashions. 'Tis easy to see they have more liberty than we have ; 'tis true they have no public places but the bagnio ; however that is a diversion they take great pleasure in. . . . Yesterday I went to the bagnio about 10 o'clock and was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them, yet there was not one that showed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity but received me with all the obliging civility possible. I know of no European Court where the ladies would have behaved themselves in so polite a manner to a stranger. . . . The bagnio is built of stone, in the shape of a dome, with no windows but in the roof,

which gives light enough. There were five of these domes joined together, the outmost serving as a hall, where the portress stood at the door awaiting a *douceur* which I did not fail to give her. The next room is a very large one paved with marble and all round it raised, two sofas of marble, one above the other. There were four fountains of cold water in this room, falling first into marble basins and then running on the floor in little channels made for that purpose which carried the streams into the next room, with the same sort of marble sofas; but so hot with steams of sulphur proceeding from the baths joining to it, it was impossible to stay there with one's clothes on. The two other domes were the hot baths. . . . The first sofas were covered with rich carpets and cushions on which sat the ladies and on the second the slaves behind them without any distinction of dress, all being in the state of nature. Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace which Milton describes of our general mother. There were many amongst them as exactly proportioned as ever any goddess was drawn by the pencil of Guido or Titian, and most of their skins dazzlingly white, only adorned by their beautiful hair divided into tresses hanging on their shoulders braided either with pearl or ribbon. . . . The lady that seemed the most considerable among them entreated me to sit by her and would fain have undressed me for the bath. I excuse myself with some difficulty. They being all so earnest in persuading me I was forced at last to open my shirt and show my stays; which satisfied them very well, for, I saw, they believed I was so locked up in that machine that it was not in my power

to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband.

The Purdah (seclusion) system in India is no part of the Islamic Law. It is of Zoroastrian, Persian and Byzantine origin, and Mr. Pickthall in *The Cultural Side of Islam* deplores the system:

So long as it was applied only to the women of great houses, who had plenty of space to exercise within their palaces and had varied interests in life; so long as it involved no cruelty and did no harm to women, it may be regarded as unobjectionable from the Islamic standpoint as a custom of the period. . . . It was never applicable to every class of society and when applied to every class, as now in India, it is a positive evil which the Sacred Law can never sanction. The general condition of Moslem women in Egypt, Turkey, Syria and Arabia has always been emancipated compared with their condition now in India.

Also the lack of education among the greater part of the women is in direct contravention of the Prophet's plain command.

In the spring of 1914, I visited Damascus and was entertained by the Turkish Governor and his charming wife in their palace situated among the hills outside the City. Madame Assam was a brilliant woman, speaking four languages fluently, and some of her articles had appeared in the *Nineteenth Century and After*. Her husband valued her sound judgment and clear perception; when a difficult situa-

tion arose he invariably consulted her before making a decision, and as she superintended the education of her four children and personally visited and ran the Hospital and other charitable institutions in the town, her life was a busy one and full of interest.

As I have been granted the great privilege of being received as a guest in this Mecca household I feel it is up to me to refute the false impressions that still exist in the West about the harem. Not only in this house, but in every harem I have visited in Arabia I have found my host with only one wife. Far from being a sensuous life of ease, these ladies are busy with their household duties ; at the same time living a happy, even a gay life, entertaining their friends and having their own amusements and festive occasions. There are no lonely old maids, the system being mostly of a joint family, and the joyous laughter and atmosphere of content that emanates from the harem convinces me that "all is well in the best of possible worlds."

His Excellency Sheikh Hafiz Wahba, when addressing the Near and Middle East Association, remarked :

"Some of those who have never been to Arabia may imagine that the heart of an Arab or a desert dweller is made of stone and that there is no room in it except for wars, feuds and vendettas, where love is afraid to tread, but such is not the case."

The Minister, who is a personal friend of Ibn

Sa'ud, then related how the King adored his wife, Queen Jauhara, who died during the influenza epidemic of 1918. She must have possessed great beauty and charm, for after all these years he yet misses her and cannot speak of her without the tears streaming down his cheeks; her apartments in the Palace at Riyad are kept precisely as they were in her lifetime, a striking tribute to her memory, while his love for her is reflected in the great affection he has for her two sons, Muhammed and Khalid.

The heart of an Arab has no room for anything if not for love, pure, true and constant; and Arab history abounds in instances of the dominating influence of women.

These are the days of our youth, our days of glory and honour,

Pleasure begotten of strength is ours, the sword in our hand.
Wisdom bends to our will, we lead captivity captive,
Kings of our lives and love, receiving gifts from men.

Give thyself up to love; there is nought divine but madness.

Give thyself up to me, Love's priest in his inmost shrine.
Shut thy eyes on the world, sublime in thy abnegation,
Only the wise who have bowed their will shall receive the prize.

Let me persuade thy weakness, I sue thee with my reason,
Let me convince thee of love with my lips till thou cease to think.

Let me enfold thee with words more sweet than the prayers of angels,

Speaking thus with my hand on thy heart till it cease to beat.

Let me uncover thy beauty and prove to thee its glory,
 Let me preach to thee of thyself the live night long,
 Let me chant new hymns to thy praise as I kneel and worship,
 Rising still like a god from my knees from eve till morn.

See what a wealth I bring thee, what treasure of myrrh and
 spices !

Every kingdom of earth have I sacked to procure thee gold.
 All the knowledge that fools have learnt at the feet of women,
 All that the wise have been taught in tears for thy sake I
 know.

Mine is a lofty ambition, as wide as the world I covet.
 Vast is the empire I claim for thee, thou spouse of my soul.
 Show me new lands to win, by Allah I swear it,
 These shall be mine and thine to-night for all time to hold.¹

April 2nd.

To-day Mecca is a seething mass of pilgrims and camels preparing to start for Mūna. Thousands of Shagdoofs line the streets, making them almost impassable; they are waiting to be hoisted on the camels' backs when required. The Shagdoof consists of a couple of stretchers over which is a dome-shaped hood of bent sticks, on which the occupant ties his carpet to protect him from the sun. The stretchers are bound together with strong cord and rest on each side of the camel's hump. The two riders sit inside with their water-bottles and paraphernalia stored in large pockets, the riders have

¹ Fragment of an old Arab love song, translated by Wilfred Blunt.

to be of approximately the same weight and mount and descend at the same moment or the whole thing tips over. I saw two unfortunate pilgrims, having parted company with their towels, lying on the ground in their birthday suits, much to the amusement of the onlookers. The Shagdoof is much rougher than the Shubreyas we met on the road to Medina and is only in use for the poorer pilgrims.

The King has forbidden the use of cars in the City to-day; the streets are already crowded, and it is difficult to move without hitting a Shagdoof. I spend the morning in my room watching the camels being loaded, listening to the grunts and gurgles, seeing them rise with their burden which often hits a balcony, upsetting the Shagdoof and its occupants and has to be readjusted.

I met the Pasha of Meknes in the Mosque before leaving for Mûna. In his Ihram and bare head I fail at first to recognise him as the gorgeous individual I knew on the Red Sea passage. Also I welcome my devoted Sheikh Sid Ahmed Es-Said from Medina, and one or two others; all are leaving for Mûna on their deluls, the thoroughbred riding camel which corresponds to the thoroughbred hunter. Late in the afternoon I go on foot to visit the hospital that the King founded some years ago. Mustapha accompanied me, and we threaded our way through the bazaars, through quiet alleys and

intricate meshes of narrow streets. We pass through an ancient archway where stands a Nubian, black as ink, grinding coffee in a small brass mill and shrouded Arabs sit at ease sipping the fragrant liquid, and smoking the narghileh, when unseen by the police !

When Ibn Sa'ud conquered this country there was nothing but the most primitive accommodation for the sick. The new hospital is on the outskirts of the City, built round a garden in which are mimosa and athal trees to give shade. A deep verandah runs round. The Director-General is waiting to receive me ; he speaks French and introduces me to some of his surgeons and doctors, several of whom have studied in Paris and Constantinople. Everything is clean and appears to me up to date, and I was agreeably surprised at the efficient way it was run. I saw the kitchen, the operating theatre, the wards and spoke to one or two unfortunate pilgrims who lay with broken limbs caused by falling from camels. It seemed such hard luck after saving up for years and travelling so far, to miss the pilgrimage in the end. However, the "intention" counts. I am told that after the pilgrimage to Müna and Arafaat, there will be a great influx of patients. A part of the hospital is unfinished for lack of funds. They badly want another operating theatre. As I wish to show my gratitude to the King and country for the privileges

they have extended to me I handed over to the Director a small gift, and great gratitude was expressed for the timely donation.

It will be remembered that the Moslem physicians were the first to establish hospitals in which the patients were grouped in separate wards according to their diseases, where cleanliness and fresh air formed part of the treatment and in which the patients' comfort and well-being was the chief consideration.

The Western world is also indebted to Turkey for the use of vaccine for the smallpox which in the eighteenth century raged in England with fatal results, carrying off nearly a third of the population. When Mr. Wortley Montagu was in Constantinople in 1717, Lady Mary had such faith in the inoculation that she had her small son inoculated at Pera. Lady Mary wrote to her friend Miss Sarah Chiswell to tell her of her great discovery :—

Apropos of distempers I am going to tell you a thing that I am sure will make you wish yourself here. The smallpox so general and so fatal amongst us, is here entirely harmless by the invention of engrafting, which is the term they give it. There is a set of old women who make it their business to perform the operation every autumn in the month of September when the great heat is abated. People send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the smallpox ; they make parties for this purpose and when they are met (commonly fifteen or sixteen

together) the old woman comes with a nutshell full of the matter of the best sort of smallpox and asks what veins you please to have opened. She immediately rips open that you offer her with a large needle (which gives you no more pain than a common scratch) and puts into the vein as much venom as can lie upon the head of her needle ; and after binds up the little wound with a hollow bit of shell ; and in this manner opens up four or five veins. The Grecians have commonly the superstition of opening one in the middle of the forehead, in each arm and on the breast to mark the sign of the cross ; but this has a very ill effect, all these wounds leaving little scars, and is only done by the superstitious. The children or young patients play together all the rest of the day and are in perfect health till the eighth. Then the fever begins to seize them and they keep their beds two days, very seldom three. They have very rarely above twenty or thirty (pocks) in their faces which never mark ; and in eight days' time they are as well as before their illness. Where they are wounded there remains running sores during the distemper which I don't doubt is a great relief to it. Every year thousands undergo this operation and the French Ambassador says pleasantly that they take the smallpox here by way of diversion, as they take the waters in other countries. There is no example of anyone that has died of it and you may believe that I am well satisfied of the safety of this experiment since I intend to try it on my dear little son.

I am patriot enough to take pains to bring this useful invention into fashion in England ; and I should not fail to write to some of our doctors very particularly about it, if I knew anyone of them that I thought

had virtue enough to destroy such a considerable branch of their revenue for the good of mankind. But that distemper (the smallpox) is too beneficial to them not to expose to all their resentment the hardy wight that should undertake to put an end to it. Perhaps if I live to return, I may however have enough courage to war with them.

When Lady Mary returned to London she carried out her purpose and a Dr. Maitland set up in practice and inoculated under her patronage ; the " heathen rite " was vigorously preached against by the clergy and violently abused by the medical profession. Undismayed by the powerful opposition, however, Lady Mary persevered in season and out, until her efforts were crowned with success. She was fortunate in enlisting the co-operation of that distinguished doctor, Richard Mead, and in 1720 when an epidemic of smallpox was feared in London he published a treatise on the practice of vaccination, which was reprinted seven times within the year ; and in 1721 Lady Mary obtained permission to experiment on seven condemned criminals. Mead supervised the inoculations and all recovered. In the following year two members of the royal family underwent the operation successfully and thereafter it became in most circles fashionable, and Lady Mary was congratulated on " the saving of many thousand British lives every year."

Besides this hospital in Mecca for the sick of

body there is also an asylum for the sick of mind. The insane have always been the object of special care among the Arabs, who recognised madness as a disease when Europe was treating it as a crime and it was generally believed that an evil spirit had entered the sufferer. A comparatively short time ago, when a certain English Monarch showed signs of excitement associated with lapses of memory, he was subjected to a form of torture by his physicians who rolled him on the floor and beat him, presumably to rid him of the incubus and to bring him back to his senses.

In Northern Africa the madman is looked on by the ignorant as a special favourite of Allah, who has withdrawn his mind to heaven leaving his body to fulfil its appointed time on earth, and if he is a harmless lunatic he is allowed to wander free to be fed and cared for by the devout.

When making my way back through the crowded streets I passed two very beautiful Shubreyahs lying outside a large house. They were both covered with crimson brocade and drawing the curtains aside I peeped in; they were entirely lined with red silk cushions softly padded and looked so comfortable that I envied the owners who will occupy them to-morrow to travel to Müna and Arafaat.

My hostess is very busy and looks harassed and worried. Her house is now crowded with friends

and relatives. Eleven came yesterday and nine more appeared this morning. When I went up to her apartments at the top of the house I found women and children lying, most of them asleep, on the divans and on the floor. I also saw several men clad in their Ihram emerge from the rooms occupied by my host and his sons. Evidently all their uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces and cousins to the third and fourth generation from Jeddah, Yanbo, Medina and any other of the Hedjaz cities have descended on them for the days of pilgrimage. Mustapha, who sleeps below, tells me it is crowded with new arrivals. Mecca is now overflowing with pilgrims. I am one of the few, probably the only lucky owner to-night of a room to myself. By this time to-morrow the City will be completely empty. All will be on their way to Arafaat.

April 3rd.

All night the camels were being loaded, never do the grunts and gurgles cease. Sleep is out of the question; apart from the universal din and excitement there is a tense feeling of expectation which tends to make one restless.

I rise early and thread my way to the Mosque through the kneeling beasts to do a final "tawaf" before my pilgrimage. It is still dark, the dawn is an hour ahead when my Mutawwif and I enter

the Haram and join the crowd circumambulating Beit Allah (the House of God). Many are in a state of frenzy and calling loudly while supplicating. Having finished the "tawaf," I sit on a step to watch the strange scene. The niche that holds the sacred stone is guarded by two soldiers armed with ropes and sticks. The maddened pilgrims fight to kiss it, a battle ensues, the soldiers hitting right and left endeavouring to keep order. Shortly a friend joins me, we watch the endless scuffle and I remark that nothing would induce me to try to kiss the stone, upon which she promptly tells me she means to do so. I implore her not to attempt it. Just then a tall young man comes up and is introduced to me as her brother; he also endeavours to dissuade her, she seizes my hand and as I don't like to refuse we fight our way towards the niche with her brother and my Mutawwif as our protectors. It is impossible to get near. We are pushed aside by excited Bedouins mad to kiss the stone and I thankfully retire whole and undamaged, while her brother brings back a rather-battered lady to me, saying the Arabic equivalent for "I told you so." Again we sit and watch the pilgrims. Fanaticism is let loose, religious fervour has become frenzy; when above the cries, the supplications, there sounds the call of the Azzan. From every minaret of the great Mosque, the cry ascends to heaven; the dawn is breaking, and peace descends on the

fevered pilgrims ; the shouts die down, and as the Muezzins' voices herald the coming day, the multitude prostrate themselves in prayer.

The uniform movement of the vast concourse, and the strange stillness that pervades during the phase of prayer when the forehead touches the ground, appeal strongly to the imagination ; then, as the many thousand worshippers rise simultaneously to their feet, the rustle of garments breaks the brooding silence, sweeping like a sudden gust through space.

“ Seek knowledge even in China.” “ It is incumbent on every Moslem man and woman to acquire knowledge.”

Thus spoke the Prophet. In the thirteenth century when Edward the First sat on the Throne of England, that learned man, Roger Bacon, dabbled in chemistry and investigated the power of steam, but he was forbidden to lecture on these subjects at that seat of learning, Oxford. He was exiled to Paris, to be kept under surveillance by the Monastic Authorities. Bacon had greatly dared in attempting to explain the scientific reason of natural phenomena, and when he prepared to demonstrate his theory, it was thought that the Devil was about to be let loose, and the universal cry was :

“ Down with this magician, down with this

Muhammedan ! ” for in those days Islam stood for the fount of knowledge and was the home of chemistry, astronomy, algebra, and those sciences which the ignorant regarded as black magic and dangerous.

It is pleasant to record that Roger Bacon was eventually set free to wander forth in the world, and acquire more knowledge ; and to “ Friar ” Bacon as he was generally known, is ascribed the invention of gunpowder and the discovery of the principles of the telescope, but it was mainly in the Moslem Universities of Spain that he acquired his knowledge, as it was also in them that Columbus discovered that the world was round, although he was forced by persecution to recant it afterwards. In those days the Moslem Universities, both under the Ommeyade Khaliphs in Spain and the Abbaside Khaliphs in Baghdad, welcomed Christian and Jewish students and maintained them at the State’s expense, and many hundreds from the South of Europe and the countries of the East took advantage of that chance to escape from ecclesiastical leading strings and persecutions.

Islam never interfered with those who professed other faiths, never persecuted, nor invented a rack or a stake for stifling differences of opinion or exterminating heresy. The words of the Koran are clear :

Let there be no compulsion in religion.

And again :

Verily they who believe and those who keep the Jew's religious rule and Christians and Sabæans, whoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day and doeth right, surely their reward is with the Lord and no fear shall come upon them, neither shall they suffer grief.

The Moslems reverence Christ in the same spirit that they reverence Muhammed, as a Prophet divinely inspired, and I well remember the surprise my cousin evinced in Damascus when a Sheikh gently took the Bible she was reading and lifted it to his lips and forehead in token of homage.

The Arabian Prophet said :

"I am not come to teach you a new religion but the same faith that the Scriptures have given you before me."

Our God and your God is one.—*Koran*, XXIX, 121.

When the early converts to Islam took refuge among the Christians in Abyssinia, the Negus questioned Jafar, their spokesman, as to the doctrines they professed. Jafar recited from memory the nineteenth Sura of the *Koran* entitled "Mary." On hearing the passage, "Verily (said Jesus) I am the servant of God; He hath given me the book of the Gospel and hath appointed me as a Prophet . . . and peace be on me the day when I was born and the day when I shall die and the day when I shall be raised to life," the Abyssinian bishops were

astonished and enquired what exactly Jesus was according to the teaching of Muhammed. Jafar replied that Islam regarded Jesus as the servant of God and the Messenger of the Most High.

“Truly,” the Negus cried with joy, while tracing a line on the ground with his stick, “between your faith and ours there is not more than this little stroke.”

Alas! centuries of misrepresentation have widened the little stroke to what appears an almost impassable barrier.

When the Khaliph Omar took Jerusalem, he rode into the City beside the Patriarch in friendly manner, conversing on many points of mutual interest; and at the hour of prayer he refused to perform his devotions in the Church of the Resurrection, where he chanced to be, “For,” he explained to the Patriarch, “had I done so, the Moslems in a future age might have infringed our treaty under colour of imitating my example.” From that day the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has always remained a Christian place of worship where the Moslems have allowed every sect free access, while protecting the shrine from being monopolised by any one creed to the exclusion of others.

Moslems, Jews and Christians lived together in happy harmony for many years and the Christians were never persecuted, save for a short period when

the mad King of Egypt, El Hakim B1-Amrillah, conquered Syria and killed many Christian hermits living in caves in the rocky Judean desert, forbidding the services held in the Holy S  pulchre and stopping the pilgrimage. It was the news of this persecution that was carried to Europe and started the wars of the Crusaders, but by the time their army reached Syria, the invaders from Egypt had been expelled and the conditions were again normal.

This first Crusading Army making their plunge into an unknown world of mad adventure were many of them, no doubt, inspired by a religious zeal to save the Holy Places from sacrilege, but historians ascribe far from altruistic motives to the most of them.

The leaders looked for glory and lands, the bishops for increased attention, the common people for liberty and plunder, the monks to violate without sin their vows to God because of their new vows to rescue the Cross, while some simple souls were sincerely animated with the desire to deliver the Holy Land.

This mighty army marched across Europe gathering followers from France, from Germany, from Italy ; and from many another country adventurers flocked to join the intrepid warriors. But hospitality along the line of march was repaid by plunder and rapine ; fellow Christians were as often the victims as were the Jews, who were brutally massacred, men, women and children at Cologne, not-

withstanding the remonstrances of the Archbishop, and the King of Hungary had to fight to save his towns and villages from ruthless pillage, but it must be remembered that the vast hordes were largely composed of an ignorant and undisciplined mob.

In that year of grace 1096, what remained of the ragged fanatical army, after enduring unbelievable hardships, plunging through the trackless forests of middle Europe, crossing snow mountains and stormy seas, eventually landed on the shores of Asia Minor to battle with a valiant foe; and there they met death and a nameless grave undaunted.

And still the Crusading Armies poured out of Europe, mighty hordes in an unending stream, led by knights of known chivalry and distinction, who in time, by overwhelming numbers, succeeded in capturing Antioch and other cities of importance and overrunning the land. On the 15th July, 1099, after five weeks' siege, Jerusalem, the Holy City of three great religions, lay at the mercy of the Christian hosts, who forgot the spirit of their Teacher in their mad lust for blood.

It was not the Christians of Syria who desired their intervention, and on the day the Crusaders captured the Holy City, where a massacre of seventy thousand of the inhabitants took place, the Christians were murdered indiscriminately with the Moslems. Men were ripped open to see if they had swallowed gold, women and children were trampled underfoot,

and the Jews who had taken refuge in the Synagogue were burnt wholesale, while the Pope's legate was seen partaking in the triumph.

In those days Jerusalem was a splendid city, its streets paved with stone, and in its centre were large, well-equipped bazaars, many of them covered in with pierced stone roofs, where the pilgrim as well as the citizen could supply all his wants.

Before the Crusades it could boast of all manner of learned men and doctors, for which reason the heart of every man of intelligence yearned towards her . . . and the pilgrim could feel himself secure in his person and possessions and at a time when security of either was the last thing to be found in Europe and the very pilgrims to Rome were plundered both in the coming and the going.

But Nemesis was to overtake the victors before a century had elapsed. Shortly after Baldwin de Bouillon succeeded Amalric as Baldwin IV, King of Jerusalem, he became a leper, and when he died the resulting confusion gave the Sultan Nur-ed-din at Damascus an opportunity to invade Palestine; but he scorned to avail himself of his enemies' misfortunes, saying, "It would be inhuman to profit by the grief of a people which mourns its Master and a blemish on my reputation to attack these unfortunates when not in a condition to defend themselves."

It was left to his successor, Saladin, Ruler of

Egypt, who had already shown his military qualities in defeating the Sicilians when they landed an army at Alexandria, to retake Jerusalem and clear the Holy Land of the invaders. Saladin was known as the Prince of Chivalry.

Throughout his career, ignoring the repeated breaches of faith and downright violation of solemn promises, he never departed from his word and is seen deporting himself towards the enemy with a nobility of spirit it is difficult to comprehend under the circumstances.¹

The Crusading Knights showed their appreciation of his qualities when they admitted him (a pagan in their eyes) into their sacred order of Knighthood.

The Sultan found the combined duties of Sultan-ship and the Holy War very exacting, but he never spared himself and always showed patience with his unruly Emirs, and a wise administration of the State. In *Saladin, Prince of Chivalry*, one reads how custom demanded that the Sovereign be the father of his people in all things and must personally decide on final appeals between his subjects. In the midst of his most arduous campaigns Saladin continued to act the judge for those who wished to come before him. When the fortunes of war wavered and anxiety preyed like a canker upon his tortured mind, he still insisted upon setting aside time for the receiving of the clamorous who refused to accept the verdicts of lesser authorities.

¹ *Saladin, Prince of Chivalry*, by C. Rosebault.

“A just Governor is the shadow of God on earth,” said Abu Bakr. “He who serves God faithfully God will place under the shadow of His Throne on that day when nothing else will remain.”

The Sultan never dismissed those, however humble, who came to complain of wrongs or demand redress. No one was too high and powerful to stand upon his defence.

One day a merchant named Omar el Kelari appeared at the public tribunal in Damascus with a certified deposition and asked that its contents be read, adding, “My affair is with the Sultan and this is the seat of Justice, where there is no distinction of persons.” The Cadi, before accepting the complaint, examined carefully the evidence and, being an upright judge, he felt compelled to hear the charges and to have them tried in open court. Apparently Omar had a clear case against the Sultan.

A slave to whom he had entrusted a large sum of money had absconded and shortly afterwards he discovered that the man had died and that the Sultan was in possession of the stolen money. He asked for redress and produced evidence supporting his assertions. The Cadi, feeling that it was not meet to adjudge a claim in the absence of the party sued, sent to inform the Sultan. Saladin, very much surprised and confident that the claim was absurd, insisted on appearing in person to defend himself;

thereby conforming to the regulations prescribed by law, and a day was set aside for the trial.

The proceedings opened with the recital of the charges by the plaintiff, and the great Sultan took up his defence.

“ This Soukar was a mameluke of mine and he never ceased to be my property till I gave him his freedom ; he is dead and his heirs have entered upon the inheritance he left.”

But Omar, not to be cowed by even a Sultan's assertions, insisted :

“ I hold in my hand an instrument that will prove the truth of what I state, which please to open, that its contents may be known.”

The Cadi thereupon read aloud the document and on the face of the evidence it contained, he adjudged Omar in the right.

But the Sovereign had not come unprepared, and demanded the date of the paper. When the Cadi gave the date Saladin answered :

“ I have witnesses to prove that at the said date Soukar was in my possession and in Cairo ; the year previous I had bought him with eight others and he remained in my possession till he received his freedom.”

Witnesses then came forward in support of the Sultan's assertions ; it was evidently a case of mistaken identity, and while the plaintiff had pleaded in all sincerity, it had been upon false premises, a

fact which he did not hesitate to admit. After the summons had been dismissed Saladin, to show that he harboured no ill-feeling towards Omar, gave him a robe of honour and a sum of money to cover his expenses, for his generosity knew no bounds.

When Saladin recaptured Jerusalem, the memory of the wholesale massacre of its defenceless inhabitants by the Crusaders was still fresh in the mind of the Moslem army, but the Sultan forbade reprisals and gave leave to the Christians to depart with a safe-conduct and money for the journey. Not all the Emirs approved of the Sultan's generosity and outside the City some of them robbed and maltreated the fugitives, but within the walls there was little evidence that a population had been delivered to their enemy and guards were posted in every street to see that the terms of capitulation were carried out in as merciful a manner as possible and the clemency and protection extended to the enemy showed a spirit of tolerance which was indeed surprising when one considered the provocation of the past terrible massacres.

Yet two years later, fresh armies from Europe overwhelmed the unhappy country in a second Crusade and laid siege to Acre ; which capitulated after two years' investment on the understanding that the lives and liberty of the garrison were to be respected, while the victors were to receive two hundred thousand golden dinars and the surrender

of two hundred Knights and all other prisoners, the money to be paid in three monthly instalments. Harsh terms indeed after Saladin's fine gesture at the fall of Jerusalem ; and made against the protests of the Sultan, who was about to send a letter of disapproval from where he was encamped with the defending army, when the banners of the Franks were hoisted on the walls.

And now Richard of England, called the Lion Hearted, because of his leonine locks and personal bravery, "was guilty of an atrocity which all the troubadours and poets who made him their hero, could never wipe out." When the captive Knights and two instalments of gold had been received, the English King had three thousand of the Moslem prisoners of Acre massacred in cold blood, it is thought because, wishing to hurry on to try and take Ascalon, he did not think it prudent to leave them behind.

But though Ascalon fell, it was not fated to Richard to enter Jerusalem, and in October, 1192, following the example of the French King, he set sail for Europe, leaving a message that he would return in three years and conquer the Holy Land. And Saladin, ever the Perfect Knight, replied that if he must lose his kingdom he knew of no one to whom he would rather lose it than the English King.

But Saladin had paid a heavy price for restoring to Islam the supremacy of the Holy Land, and

though but fifty-five years old, he was a broken and sick man. On his return to Damascus, where a great welcome awaited him, he was too weary to partake in the festivities, though to satisfy the universal wish of the citizens he showed himself at public receptions and insisted on going to meet a caravan of pilgrims bound for Mecca; he felt deeply that the privilege of doing the Pilgrimage had never been vouchsafed him, and now with the cessation of war he knew that the illness from which he suffered would make it impossible to perform the arduous journey, so he went on a bitterly cold day in February to wish godspeed to the pilgrims, and there he caught a chill which his weakened frame could not withstand. On the 4th March, 1193, his intrepid spirit passed on to the Peace he craved. The body of the Sultan lies buried in a chapel adjoining the Great Mosque, and the inscription over the entrance was composed by the faithful Vizier, Kadı el Fadil, who loved him and stood by him through the long hard years of warfare:

“O God, accept this soul and open to him the Gates of Heaven, that last victory for which he craved.”

Many sordid and cruel deeds sullied the escutcheon of the Crusaders in Palestine, but the continual and repeated violation of their most solemn pledges can be put down to the clergy, who taught

that a promise to a Pagan was not binding, and absolved the Knights of their oaths of treaty with the Sultan. But the results of these cruel and uncalled-for atrocities had its effect in embittering Moslem sentiments all the world over and in imbuing them with contempt for the Christians generally. So much so that when Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt occupied Syria, early in the nineteenth century, a deputation from Damascus waited on him, to complain that the arrogant Christians were starting to ride on horseback. Ibrahim Pasha showed grave concern at this distressing announcement and asked leave for a night to think over the situation. Next morning he solemnly informed the deputation that since it was a disgrace for Christians to ride as high as Moslems, he gave permission for the Moslems of Damascus to ride camels in the future ! And thus he brought home to the people of Damascus the absurdity of their pretensions.

April 4th.

Everyone seems happy and excited this morning. All the little ladies of the harem come to congratulate me on the pilgrimage before us. They are dressed in their clean white clothes, and the smiling slaves brought me a double allowance of hot water. As we are not starting till the afternoon, I refuse to put on my Hadj garments till the last minute, knowing I am to make a longer acquaint-

ance with them than I shall appreciate. Luckily the weather is cooler. Three camels have already gone ahead laden with blankets, cooking utensils and food from this house alone, and my own camel is carrying my mattress, pillow, blanket and requirements for my sojourn on the roof of a house at Muna, which I have found the only solution of the difficulties of house hunting. A tent would be impossible, as already there are over a thousand tents. My host has taken two small houses, one for his ladies, on which I shall occupy the roof and one for himself, his sons and his friends. After lunching alone in my room, I discover it is high time to dress and am about to do so, when the door opens and a bevy of ladies ask permission to enter. They are my friends the occupants of the harem, plus their guests for the pilgrimage and are all dressed ready in their cloaks and veils to start. I put a good face on the matter and welcome them, as I do not wish to hurt their feelings, while proceeding with my toilet in my overcrowded room. Mustapha's mother is among them, as yesterday she arrived from Jeddah and I have rashly promised to take her in my car to do her pilgrimage. Much to my annoyance she has included a narghileh among her luggage. Apart from the size of it, I do not care to infringe the law of this land which prohibits smoking, carrying two of these cumbersome articles, but it is useless arguing with the old

lady ; she, like her son, absolutely refuses to be parted from it, so, feeling that if discovered I may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb, I give in, insisting, however, that they carry the hateful things with them behind ; and as a certain amount of their luggage is packed in the back, they will no doubt have a very uncomfortable journey over the rough road.

When I descend to enter my car for the last stage of my pilgrimage, instead of my driver in orange uniform with an outsize in turbans, I see a naked youth with a towel round his loins. I ask what has happened and meet with shouts of laughter from the sons of the house, who are seeing me off, and even the transformed Suleiman smiles. It is indeed proving the truth of the old adage that "clothes maketh the man," for Suleiman in his Ihram appears but a little black boy, he who so lately had been a picturesque figure, far too resplendent to be driving a humble Ford.

The car threads its way through endless camels, Hadjis, Shagdoofs, Shubreyas and donkeys, past the burial-ground of El Maala, where lie the shattered tombs of Khadijah and the Ashab (companions of the Prophet), on past the King's Palace. Turning East we find ourselves in a valley of stony hills, with huge boulders heaved up no doubt in prehistoric days by volcanic forces. In this rocky stronghold are encamped a Bedouin tribe whose caves are their

dwelling till the summer comes, when they migrate in search of fresh pasturage for their flocks of goats and camels and the black tents become their temporary homes.

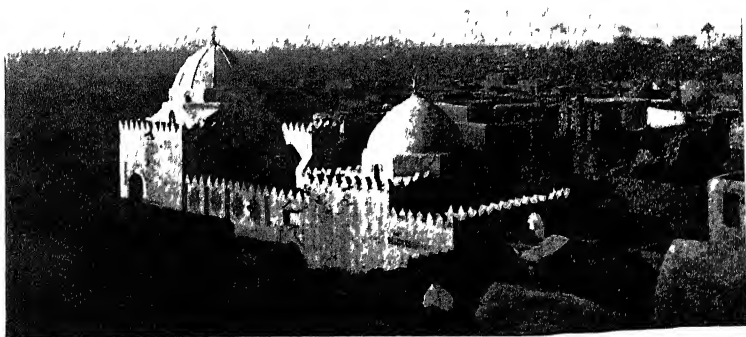
Watching the stately procession of camels with their picturesque burdens making their way through this wild strange land is a scene indescribable. Those howdahs of many colours painted in brilliant hues against the grim background of grey rock and yellow sand, moving ceaselessly on in the brilliant sunshine, are a vision to enchant the eye; one is transported to a scene in the *Arabian Nights*; it is a fairy-tale of long ago, such as delighted us in childhood.

Eventually we enter the deep ravine blasted by the late King, where our progress is slow. On emerging into the open, the hills grow steeper, we are among the mountains and are approaching Muna, that desert town that wakes up once a year to the mighty invasion of the pilgrimage.

On our left is a stone buttress built against the rocky hill-side; this is the Shaitan-el-Kebir, the great Devil we are to stone to-morrow night after our pilgrimage to Arafat. We now enter the long street of Muna with its little shops, stone cubicles open at the front, one step above the street level. The odd little houses of the inhabitants are mostly only one storey high, to be reached from the ground by a flight of steps at the back, and many of them



MOSQUE OF EL KHEIF AT MUNA



VIEW FROM MOSQUE OF KOUBA OUTSIDE MEDINA (See p 88)

have a blind of plaited straw in the front opening on to the street.

We draw up our cars at the back of the houses we are to occupy, but cannot approach within two hundred yards, as the space between our houses and the Mosque El-Khreif is filled with squatting pilgrims and tents, while the camels are tethered in the hills beyond. My host and hostess with their two tall sons are in the leading car, and behind is a lorry filled with women, children and slaves. We mount the steps to the house assigned to the ladies, and my host and his sons are the only men who may enter to wrestle with the luggage, which is prodigious—the loads of the three camels that left at dawn.

While the men remain, most of the women retire behind a sheet they have hung across part of the room as they are terrified of being seen. When he has dealt with the kitchen utensils, bedding, food and other supplies carried by the three camels, my host climbs a rickety ladder to the flat roof and spreads my mattress, placing my suitcase and blanket beside it. Then he departs to his own toy house next door and we see him no more that night.

I am delighted with my aerial abode on the roof; it is cool, and I have a splendid view of the life spread beneath me, the amazing procession of camels travelling East. My hostess calls me, and I descend to where she and her family have settled themselves

and count twenty-two women and children and wonder how they will manage during the night. It will be quite impossible for them all to lie down. Perhaps I ought to invite a few on to my roof.

The older ladies are already pulling at their narghilehs, while the younger ones make the tea and coffee and look after their babies, four of which are sprawling on the floor. They are placid infants, and I never hear them cry. I sit at the window and putting my fingers through the straw blind I manage to see the endless procession of Hadjis going East, many of them travelling all night to enable them to reach Arafaat early to-morrow. Some of the Shubreyahs are gorgeous, covered in by beautiful carpets, occasionally they are wrapped in brocades of purple, green and crimson, and I saw six camels go by whose Shubreyahs were hidden in pale-blue velvet. I could not get a glimpse of the inmates, but they must have been Ashraf (noble). Besides the camels who walk with great disdain and dignity, the more humble donkey appears in the procession, the rider seated astride well back on the rump, often carrying a child in front of him. The pilgrims are silent, the only sound is the patter of the donkeys, the soft pad of the camels. When I remember the unceasing prayers and supplications of these devoted people in the Mosque during the last two days and nights, I do not wonder at the silence as they hurry forward to the Great Pilgrimage at Arafaat.

The King has a Palace at Mûna which he occupies for the days of the pilgrimage, and where he entertains the more important of the pilgrims to dinner, thus enabling him to hear at first hand Moslem opinion the world over, and to exchange ideas with some of the Rulers of the different States of the far-flung Moslem countries. Alas! being a woman I cannot go, nor can the King receive me while in Mecca.

The ladies sit round a large tray for supper, while I eat boiled eggs as I am tired of their spiced food. Immediately after supper I climb to my eyrie and invite two ladies to share my roof, but they jib at the rickety ladder, so I lie down dressed as I am. Till the pilgrimage to Arafaat is accomplished it is forbidden to unrobe. Luckily it is cool and there are no mosquitoes in this desert town. The moon is fairly bright, the stars hang like lamps in the deep blue sky of night, while the mountains round are lit with the fires of the Bedouins encamped high up in their caves. Beneath me on one side are the pilgrims eating, praying and sleeping, on the other side is the endless procession of camels.

April 5th.

The Azzan wakes me, the Mosque of El-Khreif is still lit up, but no light appears in the Eastern horizon. I wash my hands with the sand that lies on the roof and perform the two Rekaats of Dawn,

then I lie down to sleep again. A couple of hours later I hear my hostess calling me from below. I put my things together, hand them my suitcase and follow it down the rickety ladder. Having rinsed my hands in a bowl of water I break my fast and shortly after sunrise we are all on our way to Arafaat.

I had brought an English book with me on my pilgrimage, knowing our progress must be slow in that great procession. The book was *Passages from Arabia Deserta* by that mighty traveller Doughty, and during a stop I opened it and from under my veil I was soon absorbed in reading, when a voice from a neighbouring car asked "Is that an Arabic book?" Suleiman answered quickly that of course it was Arabic, and whispered to me to close the book, which I refused to do. Again the voice spoke: "Can you swear by all we hold holy, it is Arabic and a book for the Moslems?" Before the alarmed Suleiman could answer I turned and held the book out to the anxious enquirer saying, "This is an English book and I am an English Moslem and I am here on pilgrimage by permission of the King." After a few seconds of astonished silence he returned the book to me saying "Alhamdulillah!" (Praise be to God).

Our road is through deep sand on a track that once may have been a river-bed; the valley widens, then narrows, and on our left is the site of the "battle of the Elephant," where Abraha, the Chris-

tian King of Yamen, attacked the Meccans, wishing to destroy the Kaaba and make Sanaa, his capital, the chief city of Arabia.

The battle took place in A.D. 570, the year of Muhammed's birth. The Yamen army were headed by an elephant brought specially from Ethiopia, which greatly alarmed the natives, who had never seen anything larger than a camel. The Meccans, who were greatly outnumbered, chose these rocky heights for the battle, and when the enemy came, they were met by rocks and stones hurled at them, not only by the Meccans but also by large birds who carried them in their claws.

To add to the discomfiture of the Yamenites, the great elephant from Ethiopia knelt down and refused to move on, till turned in the direction of Yamen, when it started trotting South with alacrity. With the forces of the aerial and animal world in league against them the enemy fled in disorder, and the King Abraha was smitten with a plague which spread through his army and, from the description of it, was probably the smallpox, which reduced them to such an extent that only a few, including the King, survived the epidemic and returned to Sanaa. This battle is referred to in the Koran in a sura called "The Elephant."

A few miles brought us to Muzdalafa, where stands a Mosque in ruins; then on through arid hills till we arrive at the tall pillars marking the

end of the Sacred Territory. Beyond lies the great plain of Arafaat, which is now thronged with tents, camels and pilgrims. As we approach, the dull murmur caused by the many pilgrims shouting the formula "Labbayka Allahuma Labbayka," which had long been audible, now became so loud it dominated every other sound. There were over 100,000 men and women, all now accomplishing the aims of a lifetime, "the great Pilgrimage"; which probably has meant to most of them travelling many thousand miles, enduring great hardships, and spending all their savings. Surely no other city in the world could boast of a huge population abstaining from all sexual intercourse for a given time on account of its religion, and in the case of Southern Peoples and Orientals, their faith must indeed be a living force to enable them to do so.

My host has a magnificent tent facing Jebel-er-Rahma (Mount Arafaat), where the King will presently arrive. This is for himself, his sons and his friends. The ladies have a bell-shaped tent behind, where they can neither see nor be seen.

My host invites me to remain in his tent, and I gratefully accept, and have my mattress and cushion spread where I can get a good view of everything going on. I unveil; the heat is terrific, and every few minutes I drink tea or eat pomegranates brought me from Taif. My host, who is one of the King's Ministers, has many friends to visit him, who with

the perfect manners of the Arab show no surprise at finding me sitting here.

After introductions all round, we enter into conversation, and I try to tell them of the life and sport in Britain, and wish my Arabic were more fluent to converse on the many subjects of mutual interest. Shortly before midday, we eat; I have my special dish brought, while they sit round a large tray. No knives and forks are used, we wash our hands with the water that is brought and poured over them into a basin with perforated lid, then we wipe them dry with the towels provided.

After this I wander to the bell tent behind, to see how my hostess and her party are faring without their narghilehs, as smoking would be out of the question to-day. They are bearing up, and Mus-tapha's mother is sound asleep. One of the younger ladies is reading them a sura from the Koran, which they all listen to with great intentness, occasionally breaking in with pious ejaculations. I sit among them for a while, but the heat is much worse here than in the large open tent, so I return shortly to its comparative coolness.

Shortly afterwards we do the ceremonial washing for the midday prayer, consisting of washing the face, feet and hands to the elbow, and carefully rinsing the mouth and nose, but where water is not available, it is permitted to wash the hands in sand.

A carpet is spread for me pointing to the Kaaba of Mecca, and I pray the four Rekaats prescribed. When I have finished my host leads the prayers for the men, who also do four prostrations. After which we all join in the "Labbayka Allahuma," which we repeat again and again. Then a chapter from the Koran is read, and very beautifully intoned.

There is excitement in the camp, the camel corps of Ibn Sa'ud, the Puritan troops mounted on tall deluls, are clearing a road for the King, who is on his way to Jebel-er-Rahma. As he passes in the car I get only a brief glimpse of the Ruler who by his force and magnetic personality, has won a position hitherto unknown in Arabia, where power to command cannot be held by royal descent alone.

If it is his personal genius which has accomplished the miraculous result of cementing the warlike and hitherto mutually hostile tribes of Central Arabia; if it is his peculiar ambition and intimate knowledge of Bedouin character which have amalgamated the Arab lands bordering the Persian Gulf and those bordering the Red Sea; it is his pure unswerving Puritan Faith which has spurred him on and yet kept him humble. He acts, as he prays, in the name of Allah. He obeys literally the dictates of the earliest form of the Islamic religion. In a world of increasing secularisation he stands, as a ruler, almost alone.¹

The King is followed by many picturesque figures,

¹ *Ibn Sa'ud, the Puritan King of Arabia*, by K. Williams.



ARAFAT WITH JEBEL RAHMA (THE HILL OF MERCY) ON RIGHT



THE "IKHWAN" AT ARAFAAT IN SILENT PRAYER ON THEIR CAMELS

among them not the least being Van der Pol, the Dutch banker, who embraced Islam some years ago, and whom I had already met at the British Legation at Jeddah. He rides past in his Ihram with bare head in the blazing sun, mounted on a magnificent camel, its saddle of crimson and gold glittering in the sunlight, while three other riders equally splendidly equipped follow him. Van der Pol now lives in Algeria, and every year he comes to perform the pilgrimage.

We see the Imam silhouetted against the sky on the top of the Jebel-er-Rahma. In olden days he sat a camel, but now he stands beside the tall pillar while he preaches this "sermon on the mount." His voice cannot carry to where we are, so we pray the Asr Prayer and again "Labbayka"; then as the sun sets and the King departs the tents are taken down, everything packed and put on camel or car in an incredibly short time. The Great Pilgrimage is over and all who have assembled in the Plain of Arafaat are now entitled to bear the name of Hadji till their dying day.

We are on the road again, this time facing West. I cannot help feeling sorry for the thousands of animals awaiting slaughter. Their sacrifice is incumbent on every Moslem who has the means. The aim of sacrifice is emphasised in the following verse :

There does not reach Allah their flesh nor their blood, but to Him is acceptable the guarding against evil on

your part ; thus has He made them (animals) subservient to you that you may glorify God, because He has guided you aright.—*Koran*, XXII, 37.

Hundreds of young camels, goats and sheep remain at Arafaat till the dawn breaks, when they are taken to Mûna and their throats cut in an open space not far from the Mosque El-Khreif. As they are slaughtered for sacrifice, it may be done in the Sacred Territory. The flesh is divided among the poorer pilgrims, who cut off long strips of meat and dry them in the fierce rays of the sun in preparation for the return journey, as many of them are utterly destitute by the time the Hadj is completed, and beg their way home, relying on the generosity of their fellows.

In time we reach Muzdalafa, where we wait for a few hours, our cars draw up on a slight rise, and after praying we spread our blankets under the stars and sleep. Midnight sees us on the road again, each of us armed with seven small stones which we have picked up in the desert to throw at the "Great Devil" at Mûna. On arriving at the little town we leave our cars, as all must walk to the stoning place. Mustapha's mother is again asleep at the back of the car, and no amount of shaking seems to rouse her, so we leave her stretched across the seat. Evidently she sleeps her pilgrimage through, as I have never met her doing "Tawaf" in the Mosque. She is an old lady, and no doubt

deputises one of her sons to do it for her. Abu Bakr brought her from Jeddah, so with two sons doing pilgrimage, between them they should manage the ceremonial while she slumbers.

It is barely a mile to the stoning place, but in the night it is slow work making our way through the crowds, especially for the poor ladies of the harem, who never walk.

Eventually we reach the rock which represents Satan and repeating "Bismillah" (in the name of God), we each throw seven stones. Abraham is responsible for the ceremony of stoning; when ordered to sacrifice his son, Satan appeared and nearly persuaded the Patriarch to disobey the Divine Command, but Abraham refused to listen to the voice of the Tempter and threw a stone at him, when he fled and Gabriel descending from Heaven told him to release his son and substitute a ram. In those days human sacrifice was very prevalent, especially among the Chaldeans, from whom Abraham sprang, but when the decree from Heaven to substitute an animal was given the Patriarch, it marked the abolition of human sacrifice among the nations, and it is in a measure due to Abraham that the cruel custom was abolished.

Mustapha's mother was still asleep on returning to the car, so we deposited her in the little house at Mūna while we drove back to Mecca, arriving as the day broke, when we went direct to the Mosque

to perform our "Tawaf" at the Kaaba and say the Dawn Prayer of two Rekaats, after which we returned to the house we had left two short days ago. It felt like a century. Daylight was streaming in as I wearily ascended the stairs, followed by Suleiman carrying my suitcase. I had lost Mustapha in the Mosque. On entering my rooms I hastily discarded my pilgrim clothes and went to bed, but the sun was already blazing when I fell asleep.

April 6th.

I wake to find a smiling slave congratulating me on the end of the pilgrimage. Immediately after the ceremonial washing, we all don our best clothes and smothered in black silk cloaks and veils we again repair to the Mosque to perform the "Tawaf" and also Es-Saaye (the seven runs) at El Masa. The Haram is crowded; no sleeping pilgrims. They have discarded their Ihrams, all are circuiting the Kaaba or prostrating themselves in prayer in their beautiful new clothes. The sonorous voice of the Mutawwifs, the ecstatic cry of the pilgrims, the murmuring of the prayers fill the Great Mosque like the muttering of thunder.

The Kaaba is now covered with a new carpet wrought of silk and wool and the band of gold writing that circles it about 15 ft. from the top is legible from a considerable distance as the characters are in the largest style of Eastern calligraphy and are

over 2 ft. deep. It is said that in olden days all the Koran was interwoven into it. Now it is inscribed with the following verse :—

Verily the first house founded for mankind (to worship in) is the blessed one at Becca (Mecca) a guidance to all creatures.

After which follow seven suras, or chapters, of the Koran, also the beautiful Throne verse :—

Allah ! there is none but He the Living, the Eternal,
 Years do not touch nor sleep overcome Him,
 His whatsoever is in the Heavens and the Earth.
 Who can intercede with Him except by His permission ?
 He knoweth what has been and what is to come.
 And none may know aught save whom He willeth.
 His Throne embraces the Heavens and the Earth
 And the upholding of them is no burden.
 He is the High, the Mighty.

Once Egypt sent the carpet, and the departure of the “Mahmal” with its sacred burden was one of the great annual festivals of Cairo. Now the carpet is woven by skilled workmen at Mecca.

A missing feature of the pageantry of the pilgrimage in the last few years is the Mahmal, the palanquin which was carried from Egypt on a camel each year to Mecca. It originally contained rich gifts to be distributed among the poor of the City, but later the Mahmal was so heavily ornamented that the camel could not bear any extra weight, and other camels followed carrying the gifts and more especi-

ally the covering (commonly called the Holy Carpet) for the Kaaba. The covering consisted of eight black curtains in a heavy material of silk and cotton with Koranic texts woven into the stuff in the decorated Arabesque design which gave the effect of damask. The raised texts, less than half-way from the top of the canopy, were of pure gold, and beside the splendid canopy was also sent a curtain of satin heavily embroidered in gold and silver for the door of the shrine and often called the face veil, so the Arab poets were wont to sing of the Kaaba as "Mecca's bride."

Some years ago it was thought that the old hand-weaving of the "carpet" could be superseded by machinery, and a loom was brought from Manchester at great expense, but it was not a success, and they reverted to the ancient process of hand-weaving. The Mahmal dates from the thirteenth century (645 year of the Hegira), when the first Mahmal was made to the order of the Queen Shageret el Dor, who contemplated making the pilgrimage. The Queen, whose name signified "a tree hung with jewels," wanted a palanquin worthy of her name to carry her on her journey and was quite regardless of the cost. On its completion she was so pleased with her beautiful Mahmal that she sent it again to Mecca the following year in memory of her pilgrimage. From this whim of a Queen arose the custom in Egypt of sending the

Mahmal annually to the Holy City, also a covering for the Kaaba, besides the gifts for distribution.

Many Mahmals used to be sent to Mecca from Islamic countries, from Yamen, from Iraq, from India, but for some time now, because of the enormous expense and the general economic conditions, they no longer come and a very stately pageant of the pilgrimage has passed away. The Egyptian Mahmal was by far the most gorgeous of them all and the cost of it, including the "Holy Carpet" and other coverings, was not less than £50,000 each year, the expense of which was mostly borne by the State. The Egyptian Mahmal was a palanquin covered by a canopy of gold on a dark red ground, with finely chased ornaments on the top at each corner and heavy cords of gold festooned round the sides.

I remember many years ago being in Cairo at the time of the departure of the Mahmal. The whole of the Citadel Square was lined with troops and the camel bearing the "Holy Carpet" was led up to the dais where stood the Khedive surrounded by the Ministers, Ulema and notables of Egypt. The rein of the camel was handed to the Khedive who, after reverently kissing it, passed it on to the Amir el Hadj who was in command of the procession. The guns of the Citadel were fired, then in a most impressive silence the splendid procession started for the plain of Abbassiyeh, where it rested for a few days while

the provisions and ammunition for the journey were collected. Crowds thronged the plain, coming from long distances, even from Upper Egypt.

When all the preparations were completed, the procession went by special train to Suez, where it embarked for the port of Jeddah and thence to Mecca. The Mahmal was protected by a green cover during the journey, and on arrival it was placed between the "door of the Prophet" and the "door of Peace" in the Mosque and was received with great ceremony. The covering for the Kaaba and the other gifts were handed over to the Keeper of the Keys of the Kaaba in the presence of the chief Ulema and notables, but the new canopy was not placed on the shrine till the day of the Feast of Sacrifice, when everyone was celebrating at Mûna, so when the pilgrims had completed the pilgrimage and discarded the Ihram for their festal clothes, they returned to Mecca to find the Kaaba in its beautiful new canopy. The old covering was cut up and sold to the pilgrims in special shops for the purpose close to the Haram.

Now the Mahmal has become a tradition of the past and the canopy for the Kaaba and the other coverings are wrought and equally beautifully wrought in Mecca itself, while the discarded cover is cut up and sold like in the days of yore, and I saw many pilgrims joyfully treasuring remnants of the old black canopy that once clothed the sacred shrine.

We return to Mūna once more, for the Feast of Sacrifice, which will last three days, also we have to stone two more "devils."

A rock smaller than the one already stoned, indicates where Satan approached Hagar after his failure with Abraham; she also refused to listen to temptation, even to save her son, and threw him a stone.

A still smaller rock shows where the Evil One approached the boy (according to Arab tradition it was Ishmael, not Isaac), whispering to him to refuse to allow himself to be immolated on the altar, but the child was resigned and already prepared for the sacrifice and he too hurled a stone at the Tempter, who, meeting with no success, finally fled. One is indeed glad to think that after their desperate ordeal, it all ended happily for the family with the sacrifice of a ram.

I again sleep in my eyrie under the stars, but my pilgrimage is finished, and I long to see green fields, grey skies, to hear the splash of rain, to escape from the pitiless sun.

To-morrow starts the Feast of Sacrifice, and no one is allowed to leave till it is over, without the King's permission.

There are now a hundred thousand pilgrims encamped round Mūna in tents, in their Shagdoofs and Shubreyahs on the ground, while their couched camels are tethered in the hills. Would

the King miss one small pilgrim? I can but send in my request.

April 7th.

Mustapha sends me word that the King has given me permission to depart; I am still on the roof when I get the gracious message and I hastily put my things together, descend the rickety ladder and bid farewell to my hostess and all the little ladies, servants and slaves. My car is at the door and my host and his sons beside it. I thank them for all the kindness and hospitality shown me, and enter the motor with Mustapha and a small slave armed with the key of the house in Mecca, as I must go there to collect my possessions.

The car slowly picks its way among the tents and Hadjis, all now feasting, dressed in their coloured robes, their Ihrams discarded. Savoury smells of cooking float on the air, together with the groans of camels, shrill voices of children and shouts of friends seeking each other in the crowd. The scene holds an abstracting charm of colour and movement in the sunlit valley, and it is good to look on the happy faces, to watch their quiet content.

As we proceed to leave the crowd behind, the road gets lonelier and presently we only meet a few Bedouins with camels on the trek to Mecca.

We enter a silent city, its little shops are shuttered,

its houses locked and empty, only the pigeons and dogs are left. On arriving at the house that has sheltered me during these marvellous days, I run upstairs to prepare for my journey, while Mustapha goes to the Mosque and Suleiman collects eggs and bread for us to eat.

Mustapha tells me he will return in an hour; he goes down the stairs; I hear the door slam and am left in the great void which a short time ago was crowded with humanity. I busy myself with a cold-water bath, which eventually makes me feel hotter than ever! Then I finish my packing and wait for Mustapha with what patience I can; I am now longing to get away.

I have brought two books with me on pilgrimage, an Arabic Koran and *Arabia Deserta*, to which I have already referred. I open the latter and try to fix my attention on the quaint Elizabethan style which to my mind is the charm of the book, but Doughty was too sturdy a Christian, or perhaps too bigoted, to perceive any truth in Islam, and the whole of his writing breathes such animosity that I shut the volume, feeling it sacrilege to read it in my present surroundings. I settle myself at the shuttered window, where through the pierced carving I can look down into the empty street for a sign of Mustapha, and opening my Koran at random I am soon immersed in the beautiful sura "Light."

Allah is the Light of the Heavens and the earth ; His Light is as a pillar on which is a lamp, the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glistening star lit from the oil of a blessed olive tree ; the olive neither Eastern nor Western ; the oil whereof would well nigh give light though fire touches it not, Light upon Light. . . .

I read on entranced ; it is impossible to give a translation that can convey the poetry, the subtle meaning that floods the soul when read in the original. To me the simple grandeur of the diction, the variety of the imageries, the splendour of the word painting differentiates the Koran from all other scriptures and, lest I may be considered biassed in my judgment, I will quote from the well-known Orientalist, Johnson :

If it is not poetry, and it is hard to say whether it be or not, it is more than poetry, it is not history or biography. It is not anthology like the Sermon on the Mount ; nor metaphysical dialectics like the Buddhist Sutras ; nor sublime homiletics like Plato's conferences of the wise and foolish teachers. It is a Prophet's cry, Semitic to the core ; yet of a meaning so universal and so timely that all the voices of the age take it up, willing or unwilling, and it echoes over palaces and deserts, over cities and empires, first kindling its chosen hearts to world-conquest ; then gathering itself up into a re-constructive force that all the creative life of Greece and Asia might penetrate the heavy gloom of Christian Europe when Christianity was but the Queen of Night.

I am quite oblivious to my surroundings when

I hear footsteps outside my door. For nearly three hours I have been shut within the great silent house a prisoner, and it is indeed with relief that I welcome the sight of Mustapha and Suleiman. The former tells me the reason of his delay is that he had trouble with the Police who asked him his business in Mecca when every self-respecting pilgrim is at Mūna. The latter with the help of the little slave has collected the food required for our belated lunch, which we hastily eat, as I would like to reach Jeddah before dark.

Before leaving Mecca, I once more go to the Haram to do my "Tawaf" and to El Masa for "Es-saaye."

Even now with Mecca empty and the whole Islamic world celebrating the Feast of Sacrifice at Muna, I find some devoted pilgrims performing the Tawaf of the Kaaba, and it is a boast of the Meccans that there is not an hour of the day or night, year in, year out, when Beit Allah has not got its meed of worshippers.

At Es-Safa in my haste I slip on one of the steep steps and fall backwards, saving myself with my left hand and spraining my wrist.

Mustapha binds it up tightly, but it is too painful for me to continue, so I ask him to complete my seven runs, of which I had only done four.

After bidding good-bye to the little slave, who

is returning to Mūna on a donkey with the key, I enter my car and accompanied by Mustapha we drive through the silent streets, the deserted bazaars, till we reach the green gates of the City. We show our passports, but the Wahabi Police refuse to let us go through. My heart sinks, I ask Mustapha if it is possible that the King forgot to give the order to pass us, but he answers that he heard the King's message sent by telephone. It never occurred to me, nor I believe did it ever cross Mustapha's mind that the permission to depart had been accorded to me alone and of course to Suleiman, my chauffeur. Mustapha regarded himself as responsible for my safety and had been so constantly with me during my pilgrimage that he and I never questioned the possibility that he would not accompany me back to Jeddah.

Meanwhile there is nothing for it but to wait while the Police telephone to the King at Mūna for orders. I leave the car as the sun is still hot and take refuge in an adjoining café, where the proprietor sits alone telling his beads. He is intoning the ninety-nine attributes of Allah; in the dim silence the droning voice is like the faint humming of bees. The dusky quiet of this interior is very soothing after the fierce glare outside, but I wonder vaguely why my host is not at Mūna, for his café is deserted. He hastens to supply us with caravan tea (red or green to your

liking) which is so welcome in this sun-parched climate, while he mentions that we are the only human beings that have come his way for three days. He has a look of peace and great dignity, and Mustapha tells me that he is a sayyid, a descendant of the Prophet.

In Islam, where snobbery is unknown, a man may trace his descent from the noblest tribes for a thousand years or more, yet earn his living in any humble but honest manner; and the descendants of Muhammed, himself one of the princely house of Koreish, are often to be found among the very poor.

While my host is helping us to tea, a little maid comes shyly in and slips to her father's side. Her orange robe lights up the dim interior and her small brown face is wreathed in smiles as she peeps at me from behind her parent, who gently lifts her on his knee. We soon make friends and she chatters gaily away free from self-consciousness, her great dark eyes dancing, her slim little hands gracefully gesticulating in true Arab fashion as she relates the history of her day's doings.

After nearly an hour the telephone rings and the message comes through that I am allowed to leave, but alone; Mustapha remains behind and he is under arrest for attempting to go with me. We bundle his luggage out of the car and I bid farewell to a very unhappy Mustapha, who, how-

ever, has his narghileh to console him, if the Police will ever allow him to smoke.

The gates open, I am free once more, and the little car moves swiftly through the desert hills. Mile after mile and not a living thing till we pass some Bedouins and their camels on their way to Jeddah. Before us stand the two pillars marking the Forbidden Territory. When they are passed I feel once more that I have entered an ordinary world. The sunset is magnificent. We only stop to show our passports to the astonished Police who cannot understand a pilgrim leaving before the Feast of Sacrifice. Suleiman explains that I have hurt my wrist and must see a doctor, and they show me much sympathy.

Darkness descends on us, the moon has not risen; we have left the hills and are crossing the plain of Tihama, which stretches from the low hills to the sea East to West and from Akaba in the North to Yamen in the South.

Occasional fires reveal Bedouin encampments. Suleiman is singing a song of the desert (for the song of the road lightens tired feet on lone marches and makes the hours slip as the little stars slip from the sky when the moon rises).

At last we see the lights of Jeddah. Entering the gates I give my passport to the sentry and shortly pull up at the Philbys' house, where my charming hostess welcomes me and I realise how

glad I am to be back again in the world I know and to speak my own language.

The past days have been wonderful, but I am so dazed I want to sleep and sleep and sleep.

April 8th.

Jeddah is empty. All the inhabitants that can be spared are at Muna on pilgrimage. It looks nearly as deserted as Mecca. Every European is hoping to see their servants soon, but I can give them no information. I am the one and only pilgrim to arrive and the news has reached London. The Press is cabling me to send them my impressions. How can I, in a few hundred words, describe the indescribable, or make a Western people see the strange pageant of the East?

I have discarded my Arab dress. It feels odd to walk the streets unveiled. I busy myself getting *visas* for my passport, hoping to leave to-morrow for Port Sudan. There are many ships in the harbour, all waiting for the pilgrims' return, and I am most anxious to get away before their arrival.

I cannot escape the quarantine, but prefer to do it alone.

s.s. "Toledo." April 9th.

Jeddah has receded into the past. One minaret hung poised above the seascape for a few seconds in the shimmering heat. I bid farewell to this

land of savage deserts, of green oases, of Holy Cities, the cradle of the religions of the world. If I never see Arabia again, always will live the cherished memory of these wonderful days, of Mecca alight with the torch of a living faith, of Medina and its gardens, its peace, its charm.

I am on my way to Suakin to do my five-days' quarantine. The only other pilgrims being the Nigerian Emir of Katsina, and his dusky suite of forty-eight, who were also given permission by Ibn Sa'ud to shorten their pilgrimage, and arrived last night at Jeddah. They also do their quarantine at Suakin and evidently will be my sole companions in that lonely spot. The Emir recognises me as a fellow-pilgrim, notwithstanding my European clothes, and welcomes me with a broad smile, while insisting on continually shaking hands. As they only speak Nigerian, conversation is not easy.

When at Jeddah I heard that this gallant old gentleman, who is over seventy years old, walked the whole way across the Sahara and Libyan Deserts from Nigeria to the Sudan, while his two small grandsons and the women rode camels.

For months they trudged the endless wilderness, crossing mountains, rivers and the great sun-stricken plains of Central Africa, knowing the extremes of heat and cold, with the grim spectres of thirst and hunger that are always close beside

the desert traveller ready to seize on him, should he miss his way or the camels go sick. More than two years elapsed between the time of his leaving Nigeria, and his arrival at Port Sudan, where he embarked for Jeddah! It is considered praiseworthy to walk on pilgrimage when possible, but most of those who can afford it journey by more convenient methods and perhaps not many can afford the time.

Haroun el Rashid, the Khaliph of Baghdad, insisted on walking all the way to Mecca when he performed his pilgrimage. The rigours of the journey were, however, somewhat reduced for him by his entourage spreading strips of felt for him to walk upon. It was through the charity of his Queen, Zobeida, that Mecca got the magnificent aqueduct which supplies it with its water, and to this day its citizens and pilgrims honour her memory for the priceless boon of running water.

The Captain tells me that the Emir, with a strictly limited suite, is on his way to England as a guest of the King, leaving the rest of his party to make their way across Africa, which will probably again occupy them the best part of two years.

April 10th.

We reach Suakin in the early morning, where a doctor and some police come on board. I am told a wire has arrived saying I am to proceed to

Port Sudan. It was indeed a great relief to see the Emir and his suite leave the boat while I remained on board to be taken to the comparative comfort of the quarantine station at Port Sudan. Also I shall be on the spot if the authorities allow me to sail in the Bibby liner for Port Said on the 13th. To do so I must get permission from the quarantine board, which is international, to shorten my quarantine, and also to ask the Captain of the Bibby liner if he is prepared to risk taking me as a passenger.

We reach Port Sudan at midday, and Dr. Anderson is waiting on the Quay to take me in his car to the Quarantine Station out in the desert. He allows me to stop on the way, and I buy pen, ink and lots of foolscap paper to while away the time by writing up my notes on Arabia, which have only been jotted down in pencil.

I feel a bit depressed when I see my prison, a bare little house surrounded by a high wire fence to prevent any possibility of escape. However, it is very clean and improved on closer acquaintance. I have a bedroom, balcony and bathroom with a cold-water tap, all up an outside stairway, while below sleep two Sudanese servants who look after me. Dr. Anderson is very kind and does all he can to help me pass the time. He sends me a good Sudanese cook, loads of ice from the hospital and all the latest English newspapers ; they are a

fortnight old, but I have not seen a paper for many weeks. I am under the charge of a Syrian doctor, who comes twice a day to see me and I can ask for anything I want. The door of my cage is open to enable me to walk in the desert. Not very interesting, but it passes the time.

April 11th.

Last night was a full moon, it rose out of the sea and the sun set over the African mountains in the West, where are the gold mines that once yielded their treasure to the Pharaohs. I believe they are still worked. I sat up for some time on the roof of my little house and had my mattress brought up with a pillow and blanket. There are no mosquitoes in the desert and I was soon asleep. Unfortunately a sandstorm started at daybreak, and I woke up to the stinging sand that filled my hair and eyes and swept my blanket off my bed into the desert. I called to the servants and when they had shaken my mattress clear and retrieved my blanket, I finished the night in my bedroom with the doors and windows shut and feeling asphyxiated.

. It is still blowing hard from the South, obliterating the mountains and there is nothing for it but to stay in my room and write up my journal.

The Sudanese servants are at my feet, they cannot do enough for the pilgrim; one day, "Inshallah," when they have saved the money, they also hope

to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. In the meantime I show them my photos and describe as best I can the Holy Cities.

Bibby Liner "Yorkshire." April 13th.

All has gone well, "Alhamdulillah," my quarantine only lasted three days and the Captain has allowed me to finish the remaining two days on this ship, which is now steaming for Suez.

I have got a comfortable cabin, but as it is a double one it is doubtful if I can keep it to myself when we reach Port Said, where several passengers are expected. If I cannot do so I shall go to Cairo for a few days and wait for the P. & O., on which I have a cabin reserved.

April 16th.

After a stormy voyage we are now steaming through the Suez Canal and expect to reach Port Said about 5 p.m. to-day. I thanked the Captain for allowing me to finish my quarantine on his ship, and the purser tells me I can keep my cabin to Marseilles, which is a great relief, for I am comfortable and, knowing no one on board, have plenty of leisure to write up my beloved diary.

I share my meals at a table with five charming ladies, who have all come from Ceylon, and I wonder if it is tea or rubber that interests them, till I discover they are missionaries.

Has the chief steward a sense of humour that he places the one pilgrim at this particular table?

Miss Armistead, who has a typewriter with her, most kindly offers to type my journal, which is very helpful, and I am most grateful. The purser is also arranging for me to fly by an air liner from Marseilles to Croydon, which only takes six hours and is considerably cheaper than the *train de luxe*. I should reach Croydon at 6 p.m. on Friday, the 21st, and am cabling them to meet me at the Aerodrome.

April 17th.

Yesterday the sun was setting when we arrived at Port Said, and I found my way to the Tewfikiya Mosque to see my friend Sheikh Muhammed Ahmed and tell him of my pilgrimage. The Mosque was filling for the sunset prayer, and I was quickly recognised and warmly welcomed and congratulated. In the little room behind was a cutting from the Arabic paper telling of my pilgrimage.

After the prayers, Sheikh Muhammed Ahmed accompanied me back to the ship, where I showed him some of my treasured photographs.

At 11 p.m. we were on our way to Marseilles.

April 19th.

The sea has been on its good behaviour and we are well up to time; I have engaged my seat in

the air liner on Friday morning and sent a wireless home to tell them to meet me at Croydon Aerodrome at 6 p.m.

Mount Cottage. April 21st.

We drew up at the Quay at Marseilles at 10 a.m., which was considerably later than expected: I was given no time to bid farewell to my friendly missionaries, but was rushed into the bus that conveyed my fellow-passengers and me the twenty miles to the Aerodrome. We wasted no time as there was a strong head-wind and we were in our seats and away by 11.30.

It was a small French 'plane, holding six of us, and it dipped and rocked most uncomfortably. We reached Lyons after three hours' buffeting and stopped ten minutes to refill, then off again till we arrived two hours behind time at Le Bourget, where we changed into a larger and steadier 'plane, a "Golden Ray," and eventually landed at Croydon soon after 8 p.m.

How thankful I was when I saw the wing of the Aeroplane turn and felt ourselves descending to earth, after nine weary hours in the air.

I am once more in my little house, surrounded by the old familiar life, and I am wondering if the past weeks were a dream, an *Arabian Nights'* dream, but when I look into my journal I shall

live it all again. Time cannot rob me of the memories that I treasure in my heart, the gardens of Medina, the peace of its Mosques, the countless pilgrims who passed me with shining eyes of faith, the wonder and glory of the Haram of Mecca, the Great Pilgrimage through the desert and the hills to Arafat, and above all the abiding sense of joy and fulfilment that possesses the soul. What have the past days held out but endless interest, wonder and beauty?

To me an amazing new world has been revealed.

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